

Voice of one Crying
IN A
WILDERNESS
OR

The business of a Christian, before
Antecedaneous to, Concomitant
and Consequent upon, a sore and
heavy Visitation ; Represented in
several Sermons.

First, Preacht to his own Family, lying under
such Visitation ; And now made Publick
as a Thank-offering to the Lord his Saviour.

By S. S. A Servant of God in the
S. Smith Gospel of his Son.

All the Paths of the Lord are mercy and truth,
such as keeps his covenant and his testimony.
Psal. 25. 10.

*Mala poenalia non sunt verè mala, quia fluunt à summo
Bono, nimirum Deo ; ducunt ad summum Bonum, ni-
mirum fruitionem Dei ; & erant in summo bono, cum
Christo. Biel.*

The evils of Punishment are not truly evils ; for
flow from the chiefest good, even God ; And
lead to the chiefest good, the enjoyment of God.
And are found in the chiefest good, even Christ Jesus.

L O N D O N, Printed, Anno Domini 1704.





TO THE
READER.

Christian Readers,



I t it now more than
seven months, since it
pleased the holy and
wise God, (together
with some dear and
Christian friends from
London,) to visit

my house with the Plague; whereby he
gently toucht and gave warning to my
self and whole family, (consisting then
of eight souls) but called away hence
only three members of it, viz. two ten-
der babes, and one servant; besides my
beloved sister, and a child of my pre-
cious friend, that man of God, Mr. G.C.
(since also translated). who were of
those Citizens that visited me; You

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will

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will easily believe that I can have no pleasure to rake into the ashes of the dead, nor to revive the taste of that wormwood and gall, which was then given me to drink ; and yet I see no reason, but that I ought to take pleasure in the pure and holy will of God, (which alwayes proceeds by the eternal rules of Almighty love and goodness ;) though the same be executed upon my dearest creature-comforts, and grate never so much upon my sweetest earthly-interest ; yea and I see all reason in the world why I should give God the glory of his Attributes and works before all the world, and endeavour that some instruction may accompany that astonishment, which from me and my house hath gone out and spread it self far and near. I will not undertake to make any Physical observations upon this unaccountable disease, nor to vindicate my self either from that great guilt that is charged upon me, as if I were a sinner above all that dwell in this countrey ; or from those many false and senseless aspersions, that have been cast upon my behaviour (during this visitation)
much

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much like that we read of, Mat. 28. 13. but do freely commit my self to him that judgeth righteously, and pray with the Psalmist (Psalm. 69. 6.) Let not them that wait on thee O Lord God of Hosts be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel! Neither do I purposely undertake in this Preface to reconcile the providences of the most wise God to his promises, or to salve that seeming difference between the words of his mouth, and the language of his hands; between which I have only suspected some kind of jarr, but have experienc'd an excellent harmony — In very faithfulness hast thou afflicted me. Whence arise all those uncharitable censures, with which the afflicted soul is apt to charge both himself and his God too? Spring they not certainly from these two grand causes, viz. A misapprehension of the nature of God, and of the nature of Good and Evil? let the studious and pious Reader, search and judge. If ever therefore you would be establish'd in your minds in a day of affliction; (1.) Labour to

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be rightly informed concerning the nature of God. Away with those low and gross apprehensions of God, whereby your carnal fancies do ascribe unto God such a kind of indulgence towards his children as you bear towards yours ; which indeed no way agrees to his nature. His good will towards his children is a solid, wise, and holy disposition, infinitely unlike to our humane affections. *Soli Deo competit, Amare & Sapere.* (2.) Labour to be rightly informed concerning the nature of good and evil. Judge not the goodness or evilness of things by their agreeableness or disagreeableness to your flesh, palate, or carnal interest ; but by the relation that they have to the supreme good. The greatest prosperity in the world is no further good, than as it tends to make us partakers of God : and the greatest affliction may thus be really good also. But that by the By. My design is to justify and glorify Infinite Wisdom, Righteousness, Goodness and Holiness before all men. Oh blessed God ! who maketh a seeming Dungeon to be indeed a Wine-celler ; who bring-
eth

To the Reader.

eth his poor people into a Wilderness, on
 set purpose there to speak comfortably
 to them ! Be of good cheer, O my soul ! Hos. 1.
2. 14.
 He hath taken away nothing but what Job
1. 21.
 he gave : and, in lieu of it, hath given Luk.
10. 12.
 thee that which shall never be taken
 away ; the first fruits of life, instead
 of those whom the first born of death
 hath devoured. But why do I say de-
 voured ? Dost not that truly live at
 this day, which was truly lovely in those
 darlings ? Didst thou, O my fond heart
 love Beauty, Sweetness, Ingenuity in-
 carnate ? And canst thou not love it
 still in the fountain, and enjoy it in a
 more immediate and compendious way ?
 Thy body indeed cannot taste sweetness
 in the abstract, nor see beauty except
 it be subjected in matter : but canst not
 thou (O my soul) taste the Uncreated
 goodness and sweetness except it be em-
 bodied, and have some material thing
 to commend it to thy palate ? Be asha-
 med, that thou being a spirit as to thy
 constitution, art no more spiritual in
 thy affections and operations. Dost
 thou with sadness reflect upon those
 sweet Smiles, and that broken Rhetorick

To the Reader.

with which those Babes were wont to entertain thee? (1.) Consider duly what of real contentment thou hast lost in losing those. For what were those things to thy real happiness? Thou hast lost nothing, but what it was no solid pleasure nor true felicity to enjoy; nothing but what the most sensual and brutish souls do enjoy as much as thou. (2.) Be ashamed rather that thou didst enjoy them in such a gross and unspiritual manner. Art thou troubled because any earthly interest is violated? Rather be ashamed that thou hadst and cherishedst any such interest.

But pardon me (Courteous Readers) this digressive Soliquy; and now suffer me patiently, whilest I speak something by way of Admiration, something by way of Observation, and something by way of Exhortation.

I. Let me call upon Men and Angels to help me in celebrating the Infinite and almighty grace and goodness of the Eternal and blessed God,

Mal. 3. 2. Who enabled me to abide the day of his coming, to stand when he appeared:

To the Reader.

peared : and made me willing to suffer him to sit as a Refiner of silver in my house !

Who carryed me above all murmurings against, I had almost said, all remembrance of those instruments that conveyed the infection to me !

Who reconciled my heart to this Disease, so that it seemed no more grievous, noysome, or scandalous than any other !

Who subdued me to, I had almost said, brought me in love with this passage of the Divine Will ! I can remember, (alass, that I can say little more, but that I do remember !) how my soul was overpowred, yea and almost ravishd with the goodness, holiness, and perfection of the will of God : and verily judg'd it my happiness and perfection (as well as my duty) to comply cheerfully with it, and be molded into it.

Who gave me a most powerful and quick sense of the Plague of a carnal heart, self-will, and inordinate creature-loves, convincing me that those were infinitely worse than the Plague

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in the flesh : so that I did more pitty, than I could be pittied by my ordinary visitors !

Who wonderfully preserved me from the assaults of the Devil, never let him loose so much as to try his strength upon my integrity, to drive me to a despondency, or to any uncharitable conclusions concerning my state !

Who enabled me to converse with his love and mercy in the midst of his chastenings, to see his shining and smiling face through this dark cloud : yea, kept up clear and steady perswasions in my soul that I was beloved of him, though afflicted by him !

Psal. Who knew my soul in adversity,
31. 7. visited me when I was sick and in
prison, refreshed, strengthened, comforted
my inner man in a marvelous manner
and measure, and made me appear to my
Nun- self, never less shut up, then when
quam shut up ! Oh would to God I might be
minus never worse than when I was shut up of
solus, the Plague ! The not removing of that
quam affliction-frame, I shall count a greater
cum blessing, and a more proper mercy, than
solus. the removing of that afflicted state.
Scip.

Who

To the Reader.

Who cleared up my interest in his son, strengthened my evidences of his love, satisfied and assured my soul of its happy state, more than at any time, more then at all times formerly ! I had clearer and surer evidences of Divine grace in that patient, self-denying, self-submitting frame of spirit, than in all the duties that ever I performed : The valley of tears brought me more sight of my God, more insight into my self, then ever the valley of visions, all duties and ordinances had done. When the Sun of righteousness arose upon my soul, and chased away all the mists and foggs of self-will, and creature loves, then also did all black and dismal fears, all gloomy doubtings most sensibly flee before him.

Who supplied my Family from compassionate friends, with all things needful for Food, Physick, &c. The Lord return it sevenfold into their bosoms !

Who maintained my health in the midst of sickness, in the midst of so great a death ! I do not remember that either sorrow of mind, or sickness of body ever prevailed

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prevailed so much upon me, during three months seclusion, as to hinder me of my ordinary study, repast, devotions, or my necessary attendance upon my several infected rooms, and administering to the necessities of my sick. These ensuing Discourses were then composed: which doth (at least) argue, that (through grace) this mind was not altogether discomposed, nor body neither.

Who preserved me and gave me not up to death! For I judge that I was personally visited with the Plague, though not with the Sickness.

Who hath given me a sincere and settled resolution, and vehement desire to live entirely on and to Himself: which I account to be the only life of a soul, and only worthy to be called a living! Grant me this prayer, O most blessed and gracious God, for the sake of my only and dear Redeemer!

Thou O Lord God who art witness to all my thoughts, and words, and works, knowest that in truth and soberness I publish these things to the world, not to advance the reputation of my
own

To the Reader.

own silly name, or to be admired of my fellow creatures, but for the glory of thy holy name, to beget a good liking of so gracious a Creator in all thy poor creatures, who are prejudiced against thee and thy holy Service : and to strengthen the hearts of thy servants to a most firm and lasting adherence to thee even in the greatest extremities : that thou mayest be admired in thy Saints, and glorified for giving such power, and grace, and comfort unto men. And, oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works in and to the children of men !

Mat. 9. 8.
Psal. 107. 8.

2. Suffer me to make a short Observation of some few memorable Passages, out of many ; possibly they may be for the future, though they should not be for your present advantage ; The Lord direct you to make a right application of them, according to the emergencies of life !

First, I do thankfully record the gracious design of the holy, and wise God, in that he had secretly prepared my heart, though at that time I knew
not

To the Reader.

not particularly for what. I remember that for some few weeks before, I had found a more than ordinary largeness and readiness of soul ; particularly, that I had been studying the excellent mystrie, and sucking out the strengthening marrow of that famous Text (1 Joh. 4. 8.) God is love ; from whence I had importunately prest upon my self the reasonableness of complying sweetly, cheerfully, universally with the will of God ; little dreaming then of the Plague, which was almost an hundred miles off me. Oh blessed and merciful God, who of old didst make Abraham, and yet makest his and thy children to follow thee, though they know not well whither !

Heb.
11. 8.

In the next place, I count it most worthy of my observation, (not unworthy of your consideration) that it pleased God to seize upon my Family in the beginning of harvest ; a harvest which I had too earnestly expected, too carefully provided for, and promised my self too liberally from ; which folly and vanity of mind, this Visitation thus timed, did as clearly convince me of
(me.

To the Reader.

(me-thought) as if I had seen an hand-writing upon the wall. I am ashamed, yet I will not stick to confess before all the world (God grant it may be for the seasonable and effectual warning of any!) that my vainer mind was over-pleasantly (not to say eagerly) drawn out towards secular and worldly (however necessary) employments and concerns: And thus I was rebuked.

Upon examination, I find that verily I have been guilty concerning my Children. I do not remember that ever any man reproved me for immoderate loving of them, or could for any indulgence that could be by humane eyes discerned; But oh I see and feel it as sword at my heart, that I loved them not so purely, spiritually, and properly in God, as I ought to have done. Philosophy will easily prove it to be a more tolerable vanity to dote upon a Child, than upon a Kingdom: But Christian Divinity doth abundantly demonstrate all creature-fondness unreasonable and intolerable.

The next thing that I will record shall be, the difficult task that I found

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to maintain a right humble, and a right cheerful frame at the same time : oh how oft and how long did I labour under this difficulty ! That sense of sin which was called in to promote tenderness of heart, being overmuch indulged, was ready at length to destroy that largeness and cheerfulness of soul which was so much my duty and interest to maintain : and on the other hand, the sense of Divine Wisdom, Grace, and Love in Christ Jesus being called in to keep up the soul from sinking, was ready to bear it up so high as that it almost forgot that it was in the waters. Beware, Christians, and watch diligently, that Godly sorrow do not settle into an ungodly despondency and inconsolable heaviness ; the soul not being able to bear up under its own burden ; and that a holy cheerfulness and serenity do not evaporate into an unholy frothiness and forgetfulness of your infirmities, the soul not being able to manage its own metal and motions.

I know you would willingly understand something of the frame of my heart at that day, respective to my
departure

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departure out of this world : you will best read my heart in the ensuing discourse (upon 2 Cor. 5. 6.) which I think was fetcht from thence. I shall therefore say no more as to this matter ; only acquaint you with one eminent Experience relating hereunto. My mind, or fancy, or appetite (I know not well what to call it) was sometimes enditing in me some desires to live yet longer ; I entred the lists with this temptation, and when I had fairly and calmly debated the ground and reason of such inclination, after many shifts and pretences it came to this ; I would fain perswade my self, I was not yet holy enough ; this I did immediately consent to, knowing it to be a certain truth ; But that therefore I should desire to prolong my dayes upon earth, this was a fallacious Inference. Me thought I pleased my self a while, whilst I could say, I desired only to live to be better : But after a time I apprehended a fallacy in this pretence ; for the way to be perfected in holiness, is, not living, but indeed dying. Christians, if indeed your souls be sincerely
and

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and powerfully affected towards perfect holiness, then sing not so much with Psal. David, Spare me that I may recover, 39. 13. &c. as with good old Simeon, who having seen God in the flesh, desired to go out of the flesh, that he might see him more fully and beatifically — Now Luk. lettest thou thy servant depart, &c. 2. 29. I cannot enlarge upon this Observation; I suppose I have hinted enough to shew those pretences of many men, viz. that they would fain live to be more fit to dye, to be, for the most part, but a kind of mockery, and self-deceit.

Lastly, (that I be not over-tedious) I do solemnly and sincerely profess before God, and Angels, and Men, that I was never so much as inclined to think hardly of God or his good and holy wayes, because of this dispensation; but did then constantly and freely proclaim to all that came to visit me, that sin, particularly self will, and sensual loves, are the worst of plagues, and holiness the only happiness of man; yea afflicted holiness infinitely to be preferred before prosperous wickedness.

3. Suffer

To the Reader.

3. Suffer me, as a conclusion of this Preface, and as a result from all that I have seen and suffered, to commend unto you a few excellent and necessary duties. I have much ado to forbear being large here; but I have already transgressed, therefore I will wave those common Themes, of remembering your Creator betimes, of hearkening to the voice of his Word before his Rod speak, of living in continual preparation for death, of repenting and renewing repentance, &c. and only commend two or three things, which seem to me of most excellent and necessary importance, — petimusq; damusq; vicissim.

1. Love and enjoy all things in God. Admire Divine Goodness in every created excellency, and taste a Divine Sweetness in every created comfort. O how is the noble soul of man debased, pinched, confined by low and sensual loves, whilst many men love the creature in opposition to the Creator; most men in competition with him, and almost all men in a way of separation from him! Oh base and degenerate affections! Let God be All things in your eye, so that you shall

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shall see, nor know, nor love, nor taste nothing but him in the world. Deliver your selves (oh immortal souls, to whom I write) from all those low and straitning, and starving creature-loves, and long and labour to be filled with pure, and holy, and spiritual delights, such as the Angels of God have, such as the Son of God had, when he made
Joh. it his meat and drink to do the will
4. 34. of his Father. But this you will find more largely prosecuted and prest in the last of these following Discourses. Therefore,

2. Live purely at the pleasure of God, and maintain an universal and hearty compliance with his holy and perfect will. Believe it, you will never enjoy a firm and steady peace, till you have committed all your wills and waxes to him, and wrapt up all your interests and ends in him, till your hearts be conformed to the heart of God, and your wills molded into his will. It is a difference of wills and ends, and a distinction of interests that beget all those ragings and stormings in the hearts of men against God; Mine and Thine do

not

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not only divide the world amongst men, but divide men against God, Earth against Heaven. Take this for a certain and undoubted Aphorism, that the grand interest of a soul is to comply with, and be one with God : Communion of hearts, and wills, and interests, and ends, is that glorious fellowship which a creature hath with its Creator ; it is indeed the interest and honour, the duty and dignity, yea the Heaven and happiness of the reasonable creature ; But something to this purpose you will find in the first Discourse.

3. I beseech you Christians, be not content to say, you have chosen God for your chiefest good, but pursue after him as such, without grudging, and without ceasing, longing to be as much one with him in a participation of divine perfections, as our created natures are capable. Maintain a holy and secret striving of soul towards this blessed object continually, as a thing moves towards its center, as a soul ought to endeavour to accomplish its own perfections : stand not gazing upon a Heaven to come, but labour to draw down all that peace, joy, love,

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love, purity, which Heaven is, into your own souls, by growing up into the life of God daily. Reckon that you are never in a right temper, except you be in Davids temper, when he waited for God more than they that watch for the morning, when his soul broke for the longing that it had unto him at all times. I say not, that you should prepare for death; that seems too low, both word and thing; look and live beyond death and the grave, be lifting up your heads to discover the dawnings of the day of your Redemption, be laying hold upon immortality and eternal life. Something to this purpose you will find in the second Discourse, whither I refer you.

And now accept, I pray you, these poor labours, which, for the glory of my God, I make publick, that since, with Hezekiah, I may not go up to the House of the Lord, to declare the goodness of the Lord; yet I may leave some monument of it in writing, as he did, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness. I will add no more, but entreat all serious and devout Readers to magnifie the holy name of God on my behalf, adding

Pfal.

130. 6.

Pfal.

119.

20.

2King

20. 8.

Isa.

38. 9.

To the Reader.

adding therunto their earnest prayers to God for me, viz. that the same fire that burnt up the standing Corn of my creature-comforts, may also happily consume all the stubble of my creature-delights and loves, that my God would give me a name better than of Sons and of Daughters, the blessed fruits of his Spirit instead of the Beloved fruits of the womb, that I may for ever live under the most powerful influences of this dispensation, and that the glory of the Lord may never depart out of the Temple of my soul, as it departed out of the Temple made with hands. Now to the God of all grace and peace, be all praise and glory! To him I commit you all, and rest

Isa. 56. 5.

Feb. 27.
1665.

Your friend and servant
in Christ Jesus,

S. S.

*Quod sani quaesivimus, hoc invenimus aegri :
Quæ nequit vallis visûs, tulit hæc lachrymarû.*

A

To the Honorable

the Senate of the United States

in Executive Session

at the City of Washington

January 10, 1881

Dear Sirs:

I have the honor to acknowledge

the receipt of your letter of the

9th inst. in relation to the

proposed amendment to the

Constitution of the United States

relating to the term of office of

the President of the United States

and to the manner of electing

the Vice President of the United States

and to the manner of electing

the members of the House of Representatives

and to the manner of electing

the members of the Senate of the United States

and to the manner of electing

the members of the House of Representatives

and to the manner of electing



A
Welcome
TO THE
P L A G U E.

AMOS 4. 12.

—Prepare to meet thy God O Israel.



IN this Sermon of the Prophet, the Lord reckons up the many fearful Plagues wherewith from time to time he had assayed to reclaim this perverse people, the ten Tribes of *Israel*, beginning at the 6th verse: But still concludes the relation, with a doleful *Epiphonema*, yet have ye not returned unto me. It is not my business

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ness to enquire into the several Plagues, either the clear meaning of them, or the particular time when they took place or ended; nor into the impenitence and stubbornness of the people; though many useful things might be observed from hence. But in the conclusion, because none of these judgments had prevailed upon them, God resolves to trouble himself with them no longer, but to destroy them utterly. All that he had done to them in the Land, had not prevailed; therefore now he will cast them and carry them out of the Land, by the overflowing scourge of an *Assyrian* captivity: This threatening he denounces in the second and third verses, *I will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fish-hooks, &c.* And after he had reckoned up the many calamities whereby he had sought to bring them to repentance, but they repented not, and so had demonstrated the equitableness of this final judgement, he re-assumes the same threatening, and persists in his former resolution, *vers. 12. Therefore thus will I do unto thee;*

thee; And then adds, *Because I will do thus unto thee, therefore prepare to meet thy God O Israel.*

Which words may either be understood *Ironically*, by way of derision of all their vain confidences and refuges; and then the *Doctrine* is, *That there is no standing before, nor striving against, nor flying from God when he comes to execute vengeance*; Which is an excellent truth, and of great use. Or else the words may be understood *seriously* by way of exhortation. The doubt seems to arise from the ambiguous meaning of the word [Meet] The word קָרָא signifies both to meet in a hostile manner; to assault, invade or grapple with, as a man meets his enemy; so it is used concerning *David* addressing himself to fight with *Goliath*, *1 Sam. 17. 48. He went to meet the Philistin*; And also to meet in a friendly, amicable manner, by way of communication, colloquution, salutation or converse. So it is used concerning *Isaac* going to meet *Rebekah*, *Gen. 24. 65.* and concerning *Gods* meeting of *Balaam* to speak with him, and impart

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his mind to him, *Numb. 23. 4.* If we take the word in the first sense, then it is spoken by way of Irony or derision, and so the meaning of the words is contained in the Proposition that I have laid down. If we take the words in the latter sense, then it is spoken seriously by way of exhortation, and so the meaning of them may be wrapt up into this.

Doct. That it is the duty of Gods people to study a right behaviour towards him, and to converse with him aright in the way of his judgements, in the time of their afflictions. And in this sense I shall take them, and prosecute them. Besides that general, unalterable godly frame and behaviour which Gods people owe to him as a standing duty and indispensable homage; there are some more especial behaviours and tempers which they owe to him in special cases, and are duties *pro hic & nunc*, as the season requireth. Particularly, there are some special behaviours required at our hands in the time of our affliction: And these both 1. Towards our selves, as self-examination, self-judging, re-
newing

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newing of repentance, &c. 2. Towards men, meekness, compassion, instructing, warning, comforting, &c. 3. Towards God, as we shall see anon. An afflicted condition doth call for some more especial tempers and behaviours towards our selves and others: But these I am not to speak unto from this text. It is the souls meeting God, behaviour towards him, conversing with him, that my Text leads me to treat of, and I shall not vary from it. In handling of which Position, I shall take this Method. 1. Premise some things needful to be known, concerning the souls conversing with God: For I shall retain the word [*conversing*] throughout my discourse, as being a single, yet a large and significant word. 2. Shew what it is for a soul to converse with God; and how it comes to converse with him. 3. Prove the doctrine, That it is our duty to converse with God in the way of his judgements. 4. Shew particularly, how we are to converse with God in the time of afflictions. 5. Apply it.

1. I shall premise some things needful to be known, that tend to clear up

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my way to the following discourse.

1. I premise, That *it is the great duty of man to converse with God.* I have read that it was a common precept that the Jewish Doctors were wont to give to the people, that they should single out some one Commandment, and exercise themselves very diligently in the observation of it, that therein they might make God their friend, and make him a kind of amends for the breach of many others. I doubt it is a Rule that too many Professors live by, who not having the genuine and generous spirit of true Religion, do parcel out their obedience into some little shreds of homage and devotion; and instead of consecrating their whole lives to God, do content themselves with some circumstantial and light obedience, and think themselves people of great attainments, if they do but severely tie up themselves to hearing twice a week, and prayer twice a day, and a few other acts of more solemn Worship. Certainly this is a penurious and needy spirit, much unlike the generous ample and free-born spirit

spirit of true Religion. The duty, the whole duty, the constant duty of man is to converse with God; commended in *Enoch* by the name of *walking with God*, Gen. 5. 22. Where you may observe of him, that he did not only *set out* fairly with God, or *take a turn* or two with him, but he *walked with him* three hundred years together. The same God calls for from *Abraham*, under the same name, Gen. 17. 1. Walk before me, and be perfect. But it is not only the command of God that makes this a duty: If there had been no express commandment concerning it, yet were it the duty of every man, necessarily flowing from his relation of a reasonable creature. As man is a creature, so he must needs *live upon God*; and as a reasonable creature, so he ought to *live with him and unto him*. Therefore hath God given unto man a noble rational soul, not only that he might talk and work, manage the creatures, and converse with the world; but that he might converse with the God of the world; that Infinite, blessed and glorious Being. This is the very end

of mans Creation, as man, as a reasonable creature ; This was the end of his being created in the Image of God ; and when he was fallen from this Image, this was the end of his Redemption by Christ Jesus, that Heaven and Earth might be reconciled, and those that were far off might be brought nigh ; sin is a sinking of the soul down to self and the creature : And redemption from sin is nothing else but a recovery of the soul into a state of favour and fellowship with God. So that whatever is expressed by *Faith* and *Repentance*, is contained in this one word, *Converse with God*. It is the great, the necessary, and as I may say, the natural duty of the Reasonable Soul.

2. *It is the highest priviledge of man.* The *Prerogative* of man above the beasts is his *Reason* ; and the *Glory* of reason is, that it is *capable* of knowing, loving, enjoying, and conversing with the Supreme and Infinite Good. The priviledge of Reason is not (as too many think) that it is capable of understanding Arts and Sciences ; that it is capable of climbing up into the nature

ture and course of the Heavens, and diving into the secret depths of the Earth, and Sea, and the creatures therein contained ; but in conversing with the Infinite and Glorious God. How miserably do vulgar souls abuse this noble faculty, who exercise it only in discoursing, numbring, and ordering the poor concernments of the world and the body ! Yea, certainly those wise men, those *Scribes*, those *Disputers of this world*, as the Apostle calls them, who cry up this faculty and glory so much in it, and yet do not exercise it about that high and eternal Being, do not converse with God in pure affections, and God-like dispositions and conversations, but expend those vast treasures of reason upon secrets in Nature, secrets in Art, secrets in State, or any other created Being, do enthrall their own souls, which they say are so free-born, and captivate and confine that noble principle, which they themselves do so much magnifie ; For sin is certainly the great and only shame and reproach of an immortal soul : And indeed these men, though

they put their souls to somewhat a more noble drudgery, yet are really no more happy than the vulgar sort, who spend the strength of their souls about eating and drinking, plowing or sowing, or keeping of Cattel. What difference, I pray you, in point of true happiness is there, between Boys playing with Pins and Points, and old mens hugging of Baggs and Lands? The noblest Sciences, the greatest Commands, the most enriching Traffiques are as very toys in comparison of true happiness, as the poor dunghil-possessions of vulgar men: And the wise, the rich, the learned, the honourable of the world, that take up with an employment in this world, and with a happiness in themselves, or in any creature, do as much disgrace their own souls, and as truly live below their own faculties, as he doth that knows no higher good than food and rayment; no higher employment than to toil all his dayes in a ditch. For indeed, as to all things but conversing with God, man seems to be but equal, perhaps inferior to the beasts that perish. Doth man eat,
drink,

drink, sleep, work? so do they. Doth man find any sensual pleasure, which the beasts do not sensible as well as he? Nay, the Gormandizing Emperour envied the Cranes long neck; and others have envied the more able and permanent lusts of the brute beasts, because themselves have been inferior to them therein, and have enjoyed less sensual pleasure than they. If any glory in their knowledge of natural and political things; I could instance in the strong memory, great sagacity, quick fancy, wonderful perceptions of many beasts, and their strange knowledge of many secrets which they never learnt by Books, nor gathered gradually by Observations. And as for mans communications of his notions by words and phrases, I doubt not to affirm, that there is something like to be found in Beasts and Birds: yea, that very beauty and flower of sound, even Musick (which some men magnifie so much) is more fairly and sweetly uttered by the silly Bird that sits solitary upon a bough, than by the Quiristers of the Popes Cathedral.

Cathedral. What solid Prerogative worth naming remains to man above his fellow-creatures, but his conversing with God, which we call *Religion*, and is indeed Reason rectified, sanctified, exalted, and boyled up into its pure and primitive perfection! In so much that I have sometimes thought, that I never heard a more reproachful word spoken concerning degenerate man, neither do I think that any thing can be spoken of him more shameful and dishonourable, than what the Apostle saith of the Heathen, *Ephes. 2. 12.* — *without God in the world.* By conversing with God in the world, is man truly raised above the beasts, and the godly man above all other men. Nay, hereby is the godly soul advanced to the dignity and glory of the Holy Angels, or at least to a parity of happiness: For it is this that is their perfection and glory, as we find it described in *Mat. 18. 10.* — *They alwayes behold the face of God.* And therefore our blessed Saviour doth affirm, that the Saints in the Resurrection, who shall be raised above all creature-

creature-union, to live upon God singly and entirely, shall be *ἰσάγγελοι*, *equal to the Angels of God*, Luk. 20. 36. In a word, this is the most real Heaven, setting aside all circumstances of place, &c. the perfect and proper happiness of a soul, *to see God*, Mar. 5. 8. *to be like unto him*, 1 John 3. 2. to converse with the Father by the Son, as our Saviour hath told us, who best knew it, John 17. 3. *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*. By this it is that God dwells in the soul, and the soul in God (as we shall see hereafter) and the Kingdom of Heaven doth really enter into every Believer.

3. *The natural man is utterly unwilling and unable to converse with God.* An earthly Mountain may as soon rise up to Heaven by its own power and good will, as an earthly mind: And such minds are all natural and unregenerate. Sin, as I hinted before, is a falling from God, a sinking of the soul into self, whether *sensual* self, or *spiritual* self, and a shrivelling of it
up

up into the creature, and the sinful soul is alwayes (like a shadow) moving upon the surface of the Earth, and higher it cannot get, *Rom. 8. 5.* Would you know what is the principal object of a natural mans admiration, inclination, and ambition? The Psalmist will tell you, It is some created good, *Psal. 4. 6, 7.* Will you know what is the disposition of the natural man towards the supream and uncreated good? The Apostle will tell you, It is *Ignorance* and *Enmity*, *1 Cor. 2. 14. Rom. 8. 7.* *The carnal mind is enmity against God.* This high duty of conversing with God in a right manner is besides the temper of the wicked man: never any such man did perform it. It is a contradiction: A wicked man conversing with God, is, as if one should say, An ungodly man that is godly. But that's not all; This duty is not only out of the hands of a wicked man, but out of his reach too, — *Neither can he know him*, saith the Apostle to the *Corinthians*; and again to the *Romans*, — *Neither can he be subject to him. Can two walk together, except*

cept they be agreed? saith the Prophet. Can man *walk* with God, converse with God, except he be reconciled to him? And what agreement, but by a Mediator? What Mediator between God and man but Christ Jesus, who is a Mediator, as the Logicians call a *medium participationis*, who is God man? In a word, some converse with one thing in the world, and some with another, as I noted before; but all converse principally and mainly with the creature, that are not regenerated by Grace, reconciled by Christ.

4. *It is the duty of man in all ages of life, at all times, and in all places and conditions, to converse with God.* It is a necessary, natural, certain, constant duty, springing up out of the very nature and natural will of God, and out of the very nature and relation and capacity of the reasonable soul, binding *semper* and *ad semper*, as the School-men speak, and admitting of no *dispensation* nor *diminution*. There is no time wherein it is not a duty, or wherein it is less a duty than at another time: however, we are
apt

apt to give to our selves many relaxations from it. The first *fruits*, nay, the very early *buds* of the tender soul, and of the springing faculties ; these are due to God, and ought to be dedicated to him, *Eccles. 12. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth.* Manhood is not allowed to attend unto cares and exploits, nor old age to pains and griefs, as to neglect converse with God : But whether young men build or plant, fight or study, or work, or marry, or mannage the affairs of the house or of the field, all should be undertaken and carryed on in a way of converse and fellowship with God : or whether old men sit, and muse, and meditate, or lye under the pains and grievances of decrepit age, still it ought to be in the Lord. Neither doth this duty admit of interruption, no more than of cessation : There is no dispensation given us from this duty, as in no age, so in no *hour* of our life. As we cannot live a moment *out of God*, so neither ought we to live a moment *without God* in the world. We ought continually to endeavour to
walk

walk in subservience to, and converse with God, yea and as far as may be in a feeling converse with him too. Holy *David* witnesseth of himself that the fear of God was continually before his eyes, and that he did continually converse with God; for so those words may be understood, *Psal. 73. 23. I am continually with thee.* The like is recorded of many other Saints both in the Old and New Testaments; concerning whom one may well say as the Queen of *Sheba* concerning the servants of *Solomon*, and with much better reason (*1 King. 10. 8.*) *Happy are these thy servants (O Lord) which stand continually before thee!* Neither is it the duty of some few men, that have the greatest knowledge or the most leisure. For it springs up out of the relation of a creature, and out of the very nature of the rational soul; so that no soul of man is exempted from it, however many ignorant and profane persons live rather in a professed independance upon God. Neither is it a duty only upon supposition of leasure and freedom from worldly busieness,

business, as some other things are, but is equally incumbent upon Prince and Peasant, upon him that sits in his close, and upon him that ploughs in the field ; yea they that go down unto the Sea in ships, ought to go up unto heaven in their hearts ; and not only to converse with the clouds (which they oftendo,) but above them too. A hand full of earth, and a heart full of heaven may well stand together ; For as this duty justles out no honest business, so neither should it self be justled out by any. And as this high and excellent duty agrees to all ages and times and persons, so it agrees to all conditions too : poor men do think that rich men may well do it, and rich men think that poor men had need to do it : prosperity thinks it hath better things to mind than a God, and adversity knows it hath worse things, but it must mind them : plenty is too full to entertain him, and poverty hath enough to do to bear up under its own burden : learning knows how, but will not ; ignorance says it would, but knows not how ; but notwithstanding

standing all this shuffling, the obligation to this duty ceases not : None so high as to be above it, none so mean as to be below it ; For rich and poor, high and low, learned and unlearned, Prince and peasant, though they are divided amongst themselves by punctilioes and lesser differences, yet they are united in one universal Being, meet in one and the same center, agree in the common capacity of reasonable creatures. As religion hath an interest and a concernment in the whole of the conversation, (according to that of the Apostle, *Phil. 3. 20. our conversation is in heaven*) so also hath it a room in the conversation of every man in every capacity : No Relation, Condition, Action, Change is exempted from the powerful influence thereof ; so the Apostle describes himself, by his *living in all good conscience before God* all along, *Act. 23. 1.* and by his exercising himself in this thing, *to have alwaies a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men*, *Act. 24. 16.*

Now the fifth step in order, would be, that *It is more especially the duty of*
Gods

Gods people to study to converse with him aright in the way of his judgements, which is the Doctrine it self, which I must not come to confirm, till I have shewed according to my promise in the second place, what it is for the soul to converse with God, and how it comes to converse with him.

Not to name those too low and improper notions that men ordinarily have of this high and spiritual matter, conversing with God, to speak properly of it, is a complex Act of the soul, whereby it entertains God into it self, and renders it self back again to him; receives impressions from him, and gives up it self again to him; is first filled with him, and then empties it self into him. You may conceive of it after the similitude of a Plant, that is influenc'd by the benign beams of the Sun; and in those beams spreads it self, and in the virtue and power of them grows up towards Heaven: or after the similitude of a River, that is continually filled with the Ocean, and is continually emptying it self into the same,

πάντοτε πληρεῖται καὶ πάντοτε ἐκρῆν. This seems to be our Saviours elegant allusion, *Joh. 4. 14.* where he compares a divine and godly principle in the soul, to a *well of water* springing out from God, and continually boyling and bubbling up towards him— *springing up into eternal life.* Or you may conceive of it after the similitude of a Glass, which receives the image of him that looks into it, and reflects the self same image that it receives. For indeed the brightness and beauty of holiness wherewith a godly soul doth shine as a light in the world, is nothing but a reflection of that light and brightness wherewith the Father of lights shineth into it. And so the best of men have nothing of their own to glory in; for they behold God, but it is in his own light; they love him with a love which he hath shed abroad in their hearts; they are therefore like him, because he hath stampt his own image upon them: And so they must needs acknowledge concerning all their acts of love, and communion, and delight; as *David* did in another case,

case, *Of thine own we offer unto thee.* This is indeed the true and noble converse and communion with God, wherein the life of a godly man is infinitely advanced above the life of all other men, and indeed doth nearly resemble the life of Angels: Their life is described in the Holy Scriptures, by *a seeing of God, a beholding of him face to face*; which we must not understand of a naked idle speculation, but of a real assimilation arising from the divine impressions made upon them; a beholding of him so as to be changed into his image. And such is a godly mans life, spiritual life, his life of converse with God, consisting in a participation of God, and of his Grace, and a holy reciprocation or reflection of affections to him; which are indeed two distinct acts, though originally springing from the same fountain; for the love wherewith the soul loves God, is it self an efflux from him; For by loving us, he inspires a love into us; and by influences from God, we become God-like. But this converse with God is not only by the impressions

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impressions of goodness from God, and the reflections of love and delight towards him; but is also seen in the various acts of the soul, according to the various impressions which God maketh upon the soul, and suitable to the various occasions of life; so we converse with God by acts of fear, reverence, joy, confidence, self-resignation, and the like.

Now, because we are in the body, and so cannot converse with God so purely, spiritually and immediately, as the Angels in Heaven do, therefore it hath pleased God to appoint unto man wayes and means of conversing with him, wherein he hath promised to communicate himself to the soul, and so to draw forth reciprocal acts of communion, acts of love, fear, reverence, confidence, resignation, dependance, and delight out of the same soul towards himself. Now these wayes or means may be reduced to three heads. *Duties, Ordinances, and Providences*; though indeed the two first might be contracted into one. First, I will speak a word or two of
Ordinances,

Ordinances, such as the Word and Sacraments; for I shall name no more but those two. The Preaching of the Word is a way in which God doth usually meet the soul, to communicate *Life*, 1 Pet. 1: 23. *Light*, Psal. 19. 8. *Warmth*, Luke 23. 32. *Growth*, 1 Pet. 2. 2. And the soul doth answer these impressions, *as in the water face answereth face*, by the acts of *Faith, Love, Joy, Meekness*, and holy *Resolution*. So also the administration of the Sacraments is a way wherein God meeteth the soul, and communicateth his *Love, Sweetness, Fulness, Goodness, Strength* and *Vigour* to the soul; and it reflects upon him in the acts of holy *complacency* and *delight, chearfulness, thankfulness* and *dependence*.

Secondly *Duties*, these are also wayes of converse with God; such as *Confession, Petition, Thanksgiving, Conference, Singing, Meditation, Observation*. In all which God impresseth something of himself upon the soul, and draws answerable affections of the soul unto himself, as might appear in the particular explication of them; but
 that

that would be too much a digression. Only I will here note by the way, the mistake of many low-spirited Christians, who know no other converse with God, than the bare performance of these things; this they count the very top-stone of a Christians perfections, the very flower of the spiritual life. But alas, this is a gross mistake! There is sure something more sweet, savoury, satisfactory in the spiritual life, than the dry duty: there is marrow in the bone, or else a holy soul could not cover it with so much fervour. Converse with God in duties, is a spiritual, savoury, filling enjoyment, distinct from the duties themselves: This must needs be, except we will allow to wicked and hypocritical men the same dainties, that the most sanctified souls do feed upon; and say, That the childrens bread is common to the Dogs, as well as them. The soul doth not converse with God in duties barely when it prays, or meditates; for even godly souls themselves do many times find little converse with God in these, *viz*, when

he suspends the influences of his graces, or their hearts are clogg'd or cloy'd with earthly objects, or otherwise indisposed and shut up against him: It is not speaking to God that brings the soul really nigh unto him, nor bare thinking of God that advances the soul into the excellent state of feeling converse with him. Even prayer it self may prove many times an empty sound, *vox & præterea nihil*; and meditation, that most excellent and genuine off-spring of the soul, may prove a poor dry and sapless speculation. It is not enough to set up the sayls, but there must also be wind to fill them. But then doth the soul converse with God in duties, when the dark places thereof become filled with his divine light, and the empty places thereof filled with his divine love, and the low and languishing affections thereof are ravished and revived with the powerful insinuations of his Almighty Grace; when God draws, and the soul runs; he puts in his finger by the hole of the door, and the very bowels of the soul are moved for him,

as it is described, *Cant.* 5. 4. Then doth the soul converse with God in mediation and prayer, when the Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters, when he kisses it with the kisses of his mouth; and the shaking soul finds it self marvelously settled, the doubting soul established, the frozen heart thawed, the benumm'd affections warmed, the scant and contracted capacity of it enlarged and wonderfully widened, and its slow and sluggish motions quickened into a lively and chearful compliance with, and pursuit of the supream and self-sufficient good; when the soul finds its leggs to run after that glorious object which is presented to it, lifts up its hands to lay hold upon the strength, the fulness, the faithfulness, the Christ of God; and bearing up its self upon the wings of faith and love, flies out to seek its rest and happiness; and no longer envies the birds of the Altar, for it self enters into the *Holy of Holies*, and thorough the arms of its Mediator, throws it self into the very heart of God. In a word, and that

shall be the Word of God, then doth a soul converse with God in duties, when with open face beholding the glory of God, it doth not only admire it, but it self is changed into the same image from glory to glory, i. e. from grace to grace, 2 Cor. 3. ult.

Thirdly *Providences* : These are another way wherein the soul converses with God. Now by Providences, we mean in general, *the whole work of God in governing the world, and all things therein.* And so indeed a religious enlarged soul, a mind freed from particular pinching Cares, low and selfish ends, converses with God in beholding and observing Gods settled course of governing the world. The whole Heavens, Earth, and Sea, and the admirable order kept up in them, do teach the knowledge of God, and draw up the contemplative soul into an observation and admiration of him in them ; and the pious soul longs to find some impressions made upon it self by all these, and to be affected with God therein : It is not content with a bare speculation, but its meditation

ditation of God in these is *sweet* to it, as *Dauids* were, *Psal.* 104. 34. Particularly, Gods *Providence towards mankind*, as it doth most lively express his infinite love, justice and wisdom, so we ought to converse with him therein, and in all the changes of any kind that befall man in the world, that befall all the Kingdoms of the world, the four great Monarchies of it, and all other subordinate Dominions, more especially in all the mutations that befall the Church of God in the world, and all men of all sects and sorts therein, but most especially our selves. Labour to converse with that infinite mind, wisdom and understanding that ordains and orders all the changes that befall your selves. Now our conversing with God in the several changes that befall us in the world, is in general by endeavouring to serve the Providence of God in every change. The Providence of God *serves it self* even upon wicked men, and upon all creatures that do least understand it; but a godly man only knows how to *serve the Providence of God* in the things

things that befall him : He hath no private selfish interest of his own, but counts it his interest cheerfully and faithfully to serve the will of God, to be what God would have him be, to be without that which God would have him to want, and to do what God would have him do. Every wicked soul in the world sets up some trade for himself, and drives on some particular self-interest distinct from God : But a godly soul counts it his greatest honour and happiness to be nothing in himself, nor for himself, but is wholly at the beck of his Creator ; and looking upon all his interest as being bound up in God, is solicitous for nothing else but to serve the will of God in his generation : So the life of holy David is described, *Act. 13. 36. David in his generation having served the will of God, i. e. the Providence of God,* say the *Dutch Annotat.* translating the words in this order. A good man eyeing nothing but the great and blessed God in the world, and knowing that he was not made for himself, but for a higher good, is only ambitious to be subservient

subservient to that Infinite and Sovereign Being; herein imitating his Blessed Saviour, who lived not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him, *Job. 6. 38.* and again, to seek the glory of him that sent him, *John 7. 18.* In a word, he looks upon himself, not as in himself, but in God, and labours to become *θεὸς τε τέκνον*, wholly Gods; and to live in the world only an instrument in the hands of him that worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. That in general, for the conversing with God in all kind of changes in general. Now these changes are reduced to two heads, Prosperity and Adversity. In the first of these it is our duty to converse with God, and not with the creature comforts which we do enjoy from him, as one might shew at large. But I am to speak of the latter, and to shew how we ought to converse with God in that: But first I must demonstrate, that it is our duty to do it, which was the third thing I promised, *viz. To shew that it is the duty of Gods people to study to converse with him*

aright in the way of his Judgements, in a time of affliction. And here, I hope, I need not be at pains to prove by Scripture, that besides the general business of a Christians life; some particular and more especial behaviours are required of him in an afflicted state; all will grant it sure: Besides, by that time I shall have declared *what* they are, I shall not need to prove *that* they are. Therefore for the present I shall content my self to give in three or four Reasons of it, and so pass on. It is especially the duty of Gods people to study to converse with him aright in the time of afflictions.

I. *Because then especially it is hard to do it:* We are then very apt to be taken off from it, therefore we should then especially labour to pursue it, and perform it: We are then in eminent danger to be taken off from it: and that by these means.

I. *Our senses do set us on work to converse with outward means,* which, whilst we attend upon too eagerly, we neglect and forget God. This might appear by an induction of particular

ticular afflictions; but that would be too long. I will only instance in one or two for explication. The sickness and painedness of the body, calls out the mind to seek after, and converse with Physicians; bodily wants call us to seek after bodily supplies, and so all kind of distresses call out the soul to seek creature relief. Call upon the sick and languishing Patient to call upon, and hang upon divine help, to converse with God: alas, he hath enough to do to attend upon his pains and pangs; tell him of ease, of recovery, and he can hearken to you, for thats the news that he longs to hear. Call upon the poor pined begger to seek relief of God, to converse with him: Alas, he finds such a faintness in his limbs, such a gnawing of hunger, such a restless appetite within himself, that he can groan out nothing, but *Oh that one would give me bread to eat!* In a word, the soul is more naturally addicted to mind its body to which it is joyued, than the God that joyued it to that body. Hence you may observe two things by thee way, *viz.* 1. The

reason why so few persons repent in time of sickness; the sense of sickness drowns the sense of sin. 2. The reason why so few poor people who are evermore conflicting with the necessities of the body, do not at all mind the concernments of their souls: The exigencies and straits of the body, do cry louder in their hearts than all the words and works of God. So that as health is the best time for repentance, so it seemeth that the best way to teach the poor, is to relieve them.

2. *The corruptions of the heart are then most apt to make war against Heaven.* This is the opinion of him who knows the temper of man too well, *Job 1. 11. Put forth thine hand against him, and he will curse thee to thy face.* And I am perswaded that the Devil acts much by this observation; which makes him endeavour all he can to make many good men poor, thinking thereby to make them less good; though the wise and merciful God do wonderfully prevent him. For indeed the soul is so naturally tender of the body, that its loth God himself should touch it;

it ; if he do, it is ready to fret and storm, and fye in his face. **Converse with God !** saith the wicked King, *Why this evil is from the Lord ; what should I wait upon the Lord any longer !* 2 King. 6. 33. There are many corruptions of the soul that are most ready to clamour against **God** in a time of affliction, as *Fear, Anger, Unbelief,* yea, and sinful *Self-love* and *Creature-love*, an affection that can never be taught to converse with **God**, yet will go crying after him, when he takes away any darling from it, as *Phaltiel* went crying after his Wife, or rather, crying against him ; as *Micah* cried against the men of *Dan*, saying, *Ye have taken away my Gods, and are gone away, and what have I more ?* Judg. 18. 24.

3. Temptations do then come strongest from without. Then it is the Devils time to play his game : What, put up this reproach ! what, will you sit down with this loss ! up and revenge thy self. He that knows so well the temper of mans heart so ready to curse **God** when he touches him, Job 2. 5.
will

will not fail to touch the heart, and tempt it to curse him indeed, Job. 2. 9 —
Curse God and dye.

The second Reason why we ought especially to study to converse with God in the time of afflictions, is because that is a time wherein we are most apt to think our selves excused from this duty, as if it were allowed us in our extremity to forget God, and mind our selves only. And that not only in respect of those bodily straits and distresses, which I named under the last head, but in respect of our own passions. When the afflicting hand of God is upon us, pressing and grieving of us, and taking our beloved comforts from us, we are apt to indulge our own private and selfish passions, care, fear, sorrow, complainings, &c. Yea, to think we are in some sense allowed to indulge them. How willingly do we suffer our selves to be drawn into a converse with our selves, to be contracted as it were into our selves, and suffer our selves to be carried down the stream of our own passions, which at other times we
 should

should think it were our duty to resist ! Even as the heart in naturals draws home to it in a time of danger, the blood that was dispersed abroad in the body, as it were to defend it self : so the heart in morals gathers home its powers and affections which were formerly bestowed here and there, to employ them all about it self in a time of sore affliction. And we are apt to think our selves excusable too in so doing : So that if God himself should ask a distressed soul, as he did *Jonah*, *Dost thou well to be careful, fearful, sorrowful, querulous*, because of these afflictions, losses, distresses that are upon thee ? it would go nigh to give him the same answer, *I do well to be sorrowful ; yea, and to refuse to be comforted*. There seems to be allowed us some natural affections in case of extream affliction ; which, how far they are lawful, I will not now dispute. But sure I am, that if such be allowed us, they must not be wild extravagants, wandring without the bounds of Religion, and Conscience, as if God had laid the reins upon the neck
of

of the soul, and given it leave to indulge it self in what passions it would for a certain time, as the Daughter of Jeptha was allowed to go whether she would, wailing upon the mountains for two months. We are never allowed any passions or affections sure, that do not comply with the will of God, and consist with our submission thereunto. But whatever they are, I find, that under the pretence of those, some men are apt to be carryed unto strange inordinacies, and commit many passionate outrages; and indeed the best of men are too prone to suspend and interrupt that lively and feeling converse with God, which they ought to maintain even when they smart most.

3. *Because then, is a time when there is more especial use for, and need of such converse with God.* And that
 (1) *To give rest to the soul.* In prosperity men forget God, and yet make a shift to find some kind of rest in their pleasures, friends, employments, some take comfort in their cups and companions;

companions; and indeed all are apt to fancy a contentment in creature-enjoyments. But in a time of great affliction, all these are gone, or at least have no savour in them; and where shall the weary soul find rest then? Then there's no shew of rest but in God alone. When all other props fail, then either catch hold of God or fall. There is now nothing left to give any settlement or contentment to the soul but God alone: And in him there is ease to the sick, rest to the weary, settlement to the shaking, contentment to the troubled Christian. Therefore converse with God in the day of greatest affliction; which is the same counsel in effect with that of our Saviour, *Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* (2) There is need of it, to give relief to the body also.

And so conversing with God in a right manner, is the best policy, the surest way to recovery, and relief. See what a speedy cure there is in it, *Psal. 34. 5, 6. They looked unto him and*

and were lighned, and their faces were not ashamed; This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. In vain is conversing with Friends, Physicians, Counsellors; in vain is all creature-converse without this: No rest to the soul, no ease to the body in a time of affliction, without converse with God; so that a man in affliction estranged from God, stragling off from God, is altogether miserable. In a word, separate a soul from God, and in prosperity his enjoyments are low, and in adversity the want of them is very bitter: so that there is good reason why a Christian should study to converse with God in the way of his Judgements. — But the great Art is to know how. This therefore I now come to in the

Fourth place, to shew particularly, how we are to converse with God in afflictions. Now there are two wayes of explaining this.

1. By shewing with what Attributes of God we are to converse.

2. By what acts of the soul. But
I

I shall bring both these into one.

1. We ought to converse with the *absolute and unlimited Sovereignty* of God, whereby he, as a free and supreme Agent, doth what he will, and none can say unto him, *What dost thou?* Dan. 4. 35. This *Job* often eyes and owns: Particularly, *Job* 9. 12. *He taketh away, none can binder him, and who can say unto him, What dost thou?* This we must also eye often, and own heartily. This we may well argue from Gods creating of us: He that made us thus without any *constraint*, can he not, may he not make us otherwise, and alter us without *restraint*? So *Job* argues, chap. 1. 21. We may also argue it from the subordinate Sovereignty, and inferiour Supremacy of men; Even a Monarch among men doth whatsoever he pleaseth, and who may say unto him, *What dost thou?* *Eccles.* 8. 3, 4. Yea, a very *Centurion* hath a kind of Sovereignty in this sphere, over as many as are under him, he saith unto one man *Go, and he goeth;* and to another, *Do this, and he doth it,*

it, Mat. 8. 9. And shall we not then acknowledge a Sovereign Power, and independant absolute Authority in the great and blessed God, over the whole Creation, the workmanship of his own hands? So the good Centurion argues, and infers, in the place last quoted. Nay, as the Apostle saith in one place, *We have Fathers of our flesh* who use us at their pleasure, and we do not gainsay their Authority; we do not say to our Father, *What begettest thou?* nor to our Mother, *What hast thou brought forth?* Isa. 45. 10. Nay if these similitudes will not reach you, I will say to you, as God to the Prophet, *Arise, go down to the Potters house,* there I will cause you to learn this lesson: He maketh or marreth his vessels of Clay, as oft as he pleaseth; And, are not ye in the hand of the Lord, as the Clay is in the hand of the Potter? Jer. 18. 6. I speak the more to this, in as much as I find, that however men give God good words, and confess his Dominion over them and theirs, yet when it comes to it,
that

that he touches them in any of their darling comforts, they are ready to clamour against him in their hearts, as if he did them some wrong; if not to curse him to his face. Certainly there is some Atheistical opinion of propriety, that in some degree or other is apt to steal into the most devout minds: And sure I am, we do not only barely offend, but we do our selves much hurt; we wound our own peace; we shake the settledness of our own hearts; we put our selves into briars: In a word, we both lessen our creature-comforts, and multiply our griefs, and aggravate our sorrows, by calling things our own; If we had not taken them to be our own, it would not have troubled us to part with them.

Be sure therefore to eye and own the absolute and unlimited Sovereignty of God: But that's not all; it is not enough to believe it: we must converse with it otherwise than by thinking of it, or assenting to it. Then do we converse with the Sovereignty of God.

I. *When*

I *When the powerful sence of it doth silence quarrelling, yea murrmurings, yea even disputings in the soul.* We may indeed modestly contend with men concerning their dealings with us; the *Pot-sheard* may *strive with the Pot-sheard of the earth*; but it must not say to the *Potter*, *Why hast thou made me thus?* A pacate and quiet frame of heart, is a real conversing with the *Soveraignty of God*. So did *Aaron* when he held his peace, *Levit. 10. 3.* and *Job*, when he attributed nothing unseemly to God, *Job 1. ult.*

When the sence of it doth suppress self-will. This is an unruly lust in the soul, *γυγαντώδης ψύχη*, a Giantlike spirit warring against Heaven, and breeding bate continually. This is that which maintains a *Meum* and *Tuum* even with God himself, that sets up interests (as the Jews set up Princes, *Hosea 8. 4.*) but not by God, yea indeed in opposition to him. This is the seditious party in the soul, that is alwayes crying out, *We will not have this man to rule over us: And when that darling interest*
which

which this proud rival hath set up, is touched of God, and smitten and blasted from Heaven, it is ready to fret and storm, yea, and to think it hath reason to be angry. If this Son of the bond woman were cast out, *Abraham's* Family would be all of a peece, all in order, and at rest. If this undisciplin'd and perverse spirit were quite banished; Oh what a calm day would it be in the soul! what fair and sweet correspondence would there be between God and his creature! for certainly this is the *Jonah* that raises the storm, and makes the great deeps of the soul that they cannot rest, but do perpetually roll and toss, yea and cast out mire and dirt continually. But alas, I doubt this spirit is not quite layd, no not in the most spiritual man: the best of men are ready to nourish and hatch up some darling, some private interest or other of their own, distinct from God, and the grand interest of their souls, which God himself must not touch; some Gourd or other that the cold wind must not blow upon. He is a blessed man indeed, who doth

doth so understand that he lives and moves in God alone; and is so overpowered with the sense of the infinite goodness and holiness of God, and the absolute perfection of his divine will, as that he reckons it his greatest perfection to be nothing in himself, nor have nothing of his own distinct from God, but only studies to be great in God, to be filled with God, to live to him, and for him; to enjoy all things as in and under him; who counts it his *only interest* to quit all *self-interest*, and particular ends, and to be freely at the disposal of the highest mind, conformable to the highest good, cheerfully compliant with the uncreated will. *Potiphar* had so committed all to *Joseph*, in the sense of his great faithfulness, that he knew not ought he had *save the bread that he did eat*, Gen 39 6. But this similitude is too low. A godly soul should commit all its interest, its life and livelihood, and all to God in the sense of his Sovereignty and not know ought that he hath no not his own life, but despise it in comparison of uncreated life; at

Job speaks, *Job. 9. 21.* Methinks the Sovereignty of God speaks such language to the soul and heart, as *Eli* to *Samuel*, *My Son, hide nothing from me, keep nothing back of all that thou hast,* and the pious soul should not, with foolish *Rachel*, conceal any selfish interest; so as not to be willing to part with it, when its Sovereign Lord and Father comes to search the tent; but (with allusion to *Amos 6. 10.*) when God comes to ferret out all self-interests, and shall ask, *Is there any such yet with thee?* should be able to answer boldly, *No, there is none.* Blessed is the man that is in such a case; blessed is the man whose only interest it is to serve the will of the Lord! Well, improve the Infinite Sovereignty of God to this end, and work it upon, and into your own hearts, that all self-will may stoop to it: and let the main interest of your souls, be so planted and established in your souls, that no other interest may be able to grow by it: Charm your own self-will with such severe reproofs, as this is; Either *deny thy self,*

O my soul, or *deny thyself to be a creature* : either be wholly at Gods command, or call him not thy Sovereign.

3 *When the sense of it doth beget Reverence in the soul towards God.* We ought not only to be subject to the Rod of God, but even to reverence him when he correcteth with it : and so not only to accept of the Rod, but to *kiss it too.* And surely if the Fathers of our flesh correct us, and *we give them Reverence*, Heb. 12. 9. much more ought we to reverence the Sovereign Father both of flesh and spirit. This is a devout act of the soul, whereby it looks up and adores the Infinite and Sovereign Majesty, and thinks equitable and honorable thoughts of him, even when he is in the way of his Judgements. And these are the proper acts of a soul conversing with Gods Sovereignty in the time of afflictions. When we are silent before him, subject unto him, and reverencing of him ; then do we really and truly converse with him as our Almighty and absolute Sovereign. But
God.

Gods Authority and Prerogative, though it may silence, will scarce satisfie: such a corrupt and rebellious pass are our natures grown to. Therefore,

2. *Converse with the Perfect and infinite Righteousness of God in the time of afflictions; that divine perfection whereby he renders to every man what is just and due, and no more. This we are to eye and own, and sincerely to acknowledge, even in the time of our greatest extremity, after the example of Daniel, chap. 9. 14. The Lord our God is righteous in all his works; and of the godly Levites, Neh. 9. 33. Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, thou hast done right. Argue with Abraham, Gen. 18. 25. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? Can Righteousness it self err in Judgement? Shall the Timber say unto the Rule; Why hast thou measured me thus; or to the Line, thou art crooked? Are not my wayes equal? saith the Lord, Ezek. 18. 25. Are not the Lords wayes equal? let your souls say*

too. Be ye firmly perswaded of the infinite and incorruptible Righteousness and Equity of God; but that's not all; we do not then converse with the Righteousness of God, when we do believe it, or acknowledge it: a very *Pharoah* may be brought to make such a confession, *Exod. 9. 27. The Lord is Righteous, and I and my people are wicked.* But then do we converse with the Righteousness of God, in general, *when the sense of it doth give a rational satisfaction to the soul.* And indeed, whereas the Sovereignty of God is enough to silence, yet his Righteousness had need to be called in to administer satisfaction: The former is sufficient to *stop the mouth*; but there is need of the latter to *settle the heart.* And indeed methinks it is a heart-setling consideration. For, how can the interest of the creature be better secured than in the hands of a righteous God? Where can we venture all we have, better than in such a certain and steady bottom? How can we better trust our selves, than on such firm and even ground?

ground? We will trust our selves far with an upright and righteous man: and if we hear of the miscarriage of any interest of ours at any time, it doth mightily calm and satisfie our hearts, if we are assured that it was in the hands of a just and upright person: Much more rational and steady satisfaction may the Infinite Righteousness of God administer even in the time of the greatest affliction, if it be duly wrought into the heart. But more particularly,

I The powerful sense of the Righteousness of God should make us sensible and serious. It becomes us seriously to ponder, duly to weigh, and in good earnest to lay to heart, all that is done to us by a righteous God. We use slightly to pass by, and slightly to esteem the words or actions of vain man: But it is not for nothing that the righteous God afflicts any man, in any measure, at any time. The voice of God, though it be not alwayes articulate, yet is alwayes significant. Will a Lion roar for nothing? Surely every action of the righteous
D 2 God

God hath a meaning in it. A hair falls not from our head, nor a Sparrow to the ground without him: Much less sure do greater changes befall us without him. And in all things he is infinitely righteous. Oh how doth this call us to sensibleness and seriousness! How ought all the powers of the soul to be awakened to attention, when the righteous God utters his dreadful voice! and the whole frame of the heart and life to be composed under his heavy hand! Now if ever, one would say of *Laughter*, *It is mad*: one would reckon trifling to be a kind of prophaneness, and judge that foolish jestings do almost border upon blasphemy, formerly not convenient, now not lawfull. For indeed a vain, frothy, light, trifling spirit, in the day of affliction, is in a sence a blaspheming of the Righteousness of God. As a consequent of this,

2 *It should put us upon self-examination.* Nature it self had taught the Heathenish Mariners to enquire where the fault was in a storm, *Job* 1. 7. Much more

more may the knowledge of Gods Infinite Righeousness teach us : so may the holy Word too , that word in *Lam. 3. 40.* *Let us search and try our wayes , &c.* and many others. Now do the faculties of the godly soul , being awakened , begin to cast lots upon themselves , to find out the guilty party : And certainly God hath a great hand in ordering these lots ; he doth ordinarily *shew unto man his sin*, even by the verdict of his own heart. Conscience, I mean, is Gods Vicegerent in the soul ; and though its true , this Judge is oft-times corrupted and bribed, or at least over-ruled in prosperity; yet God instructeth it to speak good sense, and to speak out , and speak the truth in the time of affliction. I believe they hit the nayl upon the head , who cryed out one to another, *Verily we are guilty concerning our Brother*, *Gen. 42. 21.* Another cryes , *Verily I am guilty concerning my Master, concerning my People , guilty concerning my Wife, concerning my Children , concerning my Estate , my Time, my Talents ;* and it may be all true. I believe

the Heathen was in the right, who lookt upon his hands and feet, and cryed out, *Judg. 1. 7. As I have done, so God hath requited me*; and the Babylonish Monarch harpt upon a right string after he was come to his right wits again, *Dan. 4. ult.* — *Those that walk in pride, he is able to abase.* God hath not given to our faculties any infallibility indeed, but he inables them to make good guesSES; and I am verily perswaded, doth many times lay the hand upon the right sore, and order this secret Lottery from Heaven: So that that faculty, or that frame, or that action which stands convicted in the Court of Conscience, is seldom held guiltless in the Court of Heaven.

3. *It should work us to Humiliation and Reformation; an heart broken, and a conversation healed of its breaches.* By Humiliation, I mean, a heart broken purely, properly, and spiritually for sin. I do not mean by it, an heart broken for losses and afflictions, and bowing down it self heavily under the burden of its distresses; no,
nor

nor a heart broken for sin, as viewing it only in the calamitous effects, and bitter fruits of it ; which I doubt is the Humiliation of most. Many may say concerning their Humiliation, (to use the Prophets words in a different sense, *Zach. 13. 6.*) *These are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends*, by the loss of my friends, the loss of my health, the loss of my goods ; these tears that you see, these groans that you hear, are nothing but the scarr which the soar hath left behind it ; and the wales which the Rod hath made. I doubt our very sorrow for sin, in a time of affliction, admits of a mixture of carnal self and passion, and so of sin too. But I mean, a pure, spiritual, proper sorrow, and hatred of sin ; which I know may be broached by sharp afflictions, and have vent given to it by piercing the vessel ; but that is not the proper cause and ground of it. *Moses* in his joy, had an eye to the recompence of reward, *Heb. 11. 26.* And so a Christian in his sorrow may have respect to the recompence of his sin, I mean,

his afflictions ; but it is not primarily and principally caused by these ; For though these dreadful showres from Heaven should cease , yet the stream of his eyes, or at least the fountain of his heart would not cease issuing forth bitter waters. Though the Righteousness of God do serve to *give* *us* to godly sorrow, yet it is the goodness and holiness of God that *gives it*. Do we sorrow for sin, because it spoiled us of our comforts, stript us of our ornaments ? Then sure we think there is somethnig in the world worse than sin, for which we should bewail it, and hate it ; and so consequently, that there is something better than God, for which we should love him. Alas, how apt are we to run into a practical blasphemy before we be aware ! In a word then to decide this controversie, Our afflictions, losses, distresses in the world, may possibly be as a *Bucket* to draw up this water of godly sorrow ; but they must not be the *Cistern* to *receive and hold it*. Serious and spiritual Humiliation is a real conversing with the Righteousness of God. To

meet God, is indeed to fall down before him; and to converse with him, is to lie down under him. The truth of which temper is best evidenced by that excellent Commentator, the Life of a Christian: This doth best declare the nature, and interpret the meaning of heart-Humiliation. He that breaks off his sins, doth best make it appear that his heart is broken for them. If you would know whether there have been Rain in the night, look upon the ground, and that will discover. Oh my friends, if the dust be layd; if all earthly joys, contentments, pleasures, concernments, be layd, you may conclude your sorrow was a shower sent into your souls from Heaven.

If you see a Boy both sobbing and minding his Book, you may conclude he hath some right sense of his Masters severity. *Conversion to God*, is the most proper and real *conversing with him* in the way of his Judgements: so he himself interprets in that complaint made, *Isa. 9. 13. The people turneth not to him that smiteth them, &c.* That which happened to *Moses* when

he had been in the Mount with God, *Exod. 34. 29.* should also be the condition of every good *Israelite*, when he hath been with God in the valley, the *vale of tears*, an afflicted state; his face should shine, his conversation should witness that he hath been with God; *the smell of this fire* should pass upon his garments, his whole outward man. The spirit of mourning should be demonstrated by the spirit of burning. If God from Heaven set fire on *the standing Corn* of our *worldly comforts*, we must answer him from within, and set fire on the *stubble* of our *worldly lusts*, and corruptions. Let me change our Saviours words therefore a little, *Mat. 6. 18.* and exhort you earnestly; Thou Christian, when thou fastest, when thou humblest thy soul for sin, *wash thy face* also, cleanse thy outward conversation from all sinfull pollution, that thou mayest appear to be humbled indeed. And this shall be accounted as a true and real conversing with the Righteousness of God in the time of affliction.

3. *Converse with the Faithfulness of God.* This attribute of God hath respect to his promises ; and therefore it may be you will think strange that I should speak of this in a discourse of afflictions, as not having place there at all. Every one will readily acknowledge that Gods Sovereignty and Righteousness do clearly appear in his Judgements ; but how his Faithfulness can be exercised therein, they see not. What, faithfull in punishing, in plaguing, in visiting, in afflicting, distressing his creature, how can that be ? Many will be ready to think rather, that God is not faithfull at such a time, when he denies what he had promised to give, takes away what he had promised to continue ; when he plagues *David* every morning, when he had promised him that the *Plague* should not come nigh his dwelling ; when he brings *Abijah* to the grave, whom he had promised, that his dayes should be long upon the Land ; and *Job* to the dunghill, to whom all the promises were made both of the life that now is, and of that which

which is to come. Is this faithfulness? Doth God fulfill his promises by frustrating them? Notwithstanding all this, it seems that the faithfulness of God hath place in the afflictions of his people: For so saith *David* expressly, *Psal. 119. 75. I know that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me*: if indeed faithfulness be taken properly in that place: Neither indeed need it seem so strange as some men make it: for God hath promised his covenant-people, to visit their iniquity with a Rod, *Psal. 89. 32. The Rod of a man*; a fatherly chastisement, as it is explained, *2 Sam. 7. 14.* where this seems to be made a branch of the Covenant, and is understood by many as a promise. But if that be not a plain promise, I am sure there is one in *Psal. 84. 11. No good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly*: And if no good thing, then no correction neither; for that is often good and profitable for the people of God in this world for many excellent ends; which (considering the nature of man) cannot well be accomplished without it;

it; as might appear in many particulars; but it is not needful to run out into them. God will take more care of his own people, than of the rest of the world; and will rather correct them, than not reduce them. It is their main happiness that he takes care for, and he will in kindness take out of the way whatever hinders it, and give whatever may promote it. Gods thoughts are not as our thoughts: he judges otherwise of health, riches, liberty, friends, &c. than we do. We are apt to measure God by our selves, and our own affections, which is the ground of our mistake in this business. We mind the things that please our flesh, our senses, our appetite, our fancy; but God minds the things that concern our souls, and their true happiness. The Saints are much dearer to God, and much more beloved of him, than they are to themselves; and therefore he will not give them what's sweet, but what's meet; he will give them what makes for their real and eternal happiness, whether they would have it or no. He loves them
with

with a strong and powerful love, and will not deny them any thing that is truly good for them, though they *cry out under it*; nor allow them any thing that is really hurtful, though they *cry after it*. So will a wise Father upon Earth do by his children, to the best of his skill & power; much more will God then, *qui plusquam patrum amorem gerit in suos*, whose bowels are infinitely larger & stronger than those of a Father. Now then, labour to converse with the faithfulness of God in the time of afflictions, which is by studying the Covenant and the promises of it, and your present condition, and comparing them together, and observing how consonant and agreeable they are, each interpreting other. As also by perswading your hearts of the consistency of afflictions with divine love and favour; and by studying to reconcile the hand and heart of God together. But especially converse with it practically, by a holy *establishment* and settlement of heart under all afflictions. For, whereas afflictions in themselves are apt to beget a fearfulness, despondency,

spondency, or at least fluctuation in the soul, the lively sense of Gods Faithfulness in inflicting them, will settle and sustain it: It is a firm and consistent thing, upon which the shaking soul may settle safely, and center it self boldly.

4. *Converse with the Holiness and unspotted Purity of God.* He is angry, and sins not; he corrects for sin, without sin. *Fury is not in me, saith the Lord, Isa. 27. 4.* There is no passionate malicious temper in the pure and holy God; no revengefull appetite to feed upon the blood of his creature. He is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity; and of a purer nature, than any way to miscarry in any of his dealings, or dispensations. Converse then with this Infinite Holiness of God: Keep up pure, equitable, honourable thoughts of him in your hearts. Take heed of fancying to your selves a God guilty of passion or partiality, or carryed away with such weak and mixed affections as we our selves are. But more practically, converse with
Gods

Gods Holiness in the time of afflictions, by laying even little sins greatly to heart : little sins, compared with Infinite Holiness and Purity, ought to be matter of great and serious sorrow to a sensible soul. Again take heed of the least miscarriages under affliction, of departing from God in the least. This I know is the great duty and care of every tender-hearted Christian at all times. But I conceive we ought more especially to press it upon our hearts in the time of affliction, because we are then most apt to indulge some kind of humane passions, which we call natural affections; as if we had a license to care, and fear, and grieve, and complain, not only in an extraordinary, but even in an irregular manner. Oh let the sense of Gods Infinite Purity, and perfect Holiness, check and awe those very natural affections, be they what they will, if they offer to exceed their bounds, and overflow their banks. But this I toucht upon before under another head, amongst the Reasons of the Doctrine. Therefore,

5. Converse

5. *Converse with the Almighty Power of God.* That God is Infinite and Almighty in Power, I need not undertake to demonstrate. No man hath read a leaf in Scripture, nor indeed turned over one leaf in the book of the creatures, that hath not learnt this. I need not sure turn you to any particular mighty work of God: They that instance in his letting loose the virtues of the creatures, in the case of the universal deluge, or binding up of their influences, as in the case of the three captive Jews, *Daniel* and *Jonah*, when he kept the fire from burning, and forbade the Lions to eat one, and the fish to digest another Prophet whom he had eaten, do make but a poor guess at Almightyness, but a faint essay to describe it. The Creation of the least creature out of nothing, is an higher argument of Divine Power, than the command of the greatest that is already created. Eye God duly in the notion of a Creator; yea, of a Creator of your own souls and bodies, and you have enough to fill you with everlasting admiration, as *David*
was

was filled, *Psal.* 139. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* But it is not enough to eye or acknowledge, or admire; we must yet do more, if we will rightly converse with the Almighty of God, viz. by the acts of *Reverence and Dependance.*

1. *Reverence that Almighty and glorious God in your hearts,* who can bring *quidlibet ex quolibet*, any thing out of any thing; yea, out of nothing; yea, any thing to nothing in a moment. Reverence that power of God, that can pour contempt upon Princes; that can bring *Job* the greatest of all the men of the East, to lye in the Ashes, and make his Bed in the Dunghill; that can send home *Naomi* empty, who went out full and flourishing. Hath he done so by you, debased you when you were high, tumbled you down from the clouds, and rowled you in the dust, emptied you when you were full, withered you when you were fresh and flourishing? Let not God lose the glory of his Almighty Power: reverence that glorious hand of God.

2. Rest upon the same Almighty
God,

God, who can also bring up the same *Job* from the dunghil, and set him with Princes, and fill empty *Naomi* with a famous off-spring, throwing into her lap one of the Ancestors of the *Messiah*, according to the flesh. The same Power that caused your Sun to go down at mid-day, when you least *suspected*, can also cause it to rise at midnight, when you least *hope*. Dwell not upon creature probabilities or improbabilities : but lift up thy self believing soul, and be assured, that God can do what he will, and he will do what is good for them that love him, according to the dictates of unteachable wisdom and goodness. Thou that art rolled in the dust, yet arise and roll thy self upon those Almighty Arms that brought thee thither, and are able to advance thee; As I have seen a child thrown by his Father off, and thrown down to the ground in a seeming displeasure, yet clinging to the same hand, and will not let it go, till at length he rise up again by it : a fit emblem of a child of God, whom his heavenly Father seems as if he had cast off. The wound-

wounding hand of God is apt to amaze indeed, and to beget consternation and astonishment. But remember, the same hand that wounds, can also heal; he that breaks us, can also make up all our breaches: let this beget confidence and dependence. God never wounds deeper, than that he can easily bind up the wound again; never throws his people so low, as that they should be out of his reach. Take heed therefore of unseemly despondencies; cast not away your confidence, which shall have a recompence, if ye maintain it: A recompence, I say; for that God that can recover the setting Sun, and exalt it in its beauty and brightness, and doth so every morning; that can cloath the forlorn and naked trees with leaves, and fruits; that can recover the verdure of the withering grass, and doth so every year; he can also cause light to arise to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, *Isa. 9. 2.*

He that could give unto *Amaziah* much more then that which he parted with

with at his command, *2 Chron. 25. 9.* that could turn again the captivity of *Job*, and give him double for what he had taken from him *Job ult. 10.* he can surely make his people glad according to the dayes wherein he hath afflicted them, and the years wherein they have seen evil, *Psal. 90. 15.* He can recompence and restore to his penitent people the fruits which the Locusts and the Caterpillars have consumed, according to his promise, *Joel 2. 25.* He can recompence to his people the comforts of health and liberty, which sickness hath consumed; the comforts of friends and relations, which the grave hath devoured. He that hath made the Springs dry. (*Jer. 51. 36.*) can as easily make the parched ground to become a pool, and the thirsty land, springs of water, *Isa. 35. 7.* as you find both elegantly joyned together, *Psal. 107. 33, 35.* He turneth water springs into dry grounds, & sic vicissim. Say not therefore with the captive Jews, *Ezek. 37. 11.* Our bones are dryed, and our hope is lost, &c. For God can cause even those dry bones to live. Say not
with

with that low-spirited Courtier, 2 King. 7. 19. *If the Lord should make windows in Heaven,* might such plenty be in a Samaria? For he did accomplish it, and yet not rain it from Heaven neither. But say with Job rather, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him,* Job 13. 15. And with the three Worthies, *Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of thine hand O King,* Dan. 3. 17. So, he is able to deliver us out of thine hand, O Enemy, O Prison, O Sickness; yea out of thine hand O grave. If we despond, and be dejected both in mind and body at the same time, then is our condition indeed sad and shamefull: Nay, we do more reproach God by such a temper in our affliction, than he reproacheth us in afflicting us. Make it appear Christians, that though God have cast you down, yet you do believe that he hath not cast you off; and that you, although you be sorely shaken by him, yet are not shaken off from him. Thus you shall glorifie the Almighty Power of God in the day of your Visitation.

6. Converse

6. Converse with the Infinite and unsearchable *Wisdom* of God : especially with the *Wisdom* of God in reference to his Judgements, and our afflictions. He is infinitely wise in reference to our afflictions. For, 1. *He knows what, and what manner, and what measure of correction we stand in need of.* 2. *When, and how best to deliver us.* 3. *How to make the best use of all for our good.*

First, *He knows what, and what manner, and what measure of correction we stand in need of.* He is that wise Physician, that knows what humour is most predominant in the souls of his servants, and what is the most proper Medicine to purge it out : where the most corrupt blood is settled, and at what vein to let it out. He is infinitely knowing of the various tempers and distempers of his servants, and can apply himself suitably to them all. And as to the measure and degree, he is also infinitely wise, and exact. He doth weigh out the afflictions of his people to a grain for quantity, and measure them to a day and hour for duration. He did not miss of his time,

no not one day in four hundred and thirty years, *Exod.* 12. 41. So many years of bondage were determined upon the people, and after those years were expired, the very next day, the hosts of the Lord went up out of *Egypt*. And as for measure, he observes a certain proportion, as you may see in that full Text, *Isa.* 28. 27, 28. As the Husbandman uses differing wayes of purging and cleansing different sorts of grain, beating the *Fitches with a Staff*, and *Cummin with a Rod*, because they are a weaker sort of grain, and will not endure hard usage; but *bruising the Bread Corn*, because threshing will not suffice, and he is loth to break it all to pieces with turning his Cart-wheels upon it. An elegant similitude, whereby God insinuateth his different waies of correcting his people, and observing a suitableness to their strength and temper, when less would not do, and more would overdo. He must correct so far as to bruise; but will be sure not to break and spoil. He that saith unto the proud waves of the swelling Sea,
Hitherto

Hitherto shall ye come, and no further,
Job 38. 11. hath the same command
over these Metaphorical waves, those
floods of affliction, which he lets loose
upon his people, and they cannot go
an inch further then he hath appoint-
ed: He saith, *Hitherto shall this*
Sickness, this Mortality, this Persecution
go, and no further: and even these
storms, and this Sea obey him. Now we
converse with this Instance of Divine
Wisdom, not only when we observe it,
and acknowledge it; but,

1. *When it begets in us a friendly*
and charitable temper towards second
causes: When we are at peace with
the whole Creation, even with ene-
mies themselves, and in perfect chari-
ty with those very Plagues and Sick-
nesses that do arrest us: rather admiri-
ng and delighting in their subservi-
ency to God, than at all maligning
their severe influences upon us. A
good man is so much in love with the
pure, and holy, and perfect will of God,
that he desires also to fall in love with,
at least he is at peace with every
thing that executes it, that serves the
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will of his heavenly Father. He sees no reason in the world to fall out with, and fret against any man, or any thing that is a means to affect him; but views them all as instruments in the hand of God, readily serving his will, and doing his pleasure, and under this notion is charitably affected towards them all. Observe a little, and admire, how *David* was reconciled to the Rod, because it was in the hand of his Father, and seems to kiss it for the relation that it had to the Divine Will, 2 Sam. 16. 11. *Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.* This gracious soul is so wonderfully in love with the Will of God, that he could almost find in his heart to be reconciled to sin it self, if it do accomplish it, and to be friends with the wrath of man, if it work the righteousness of God. And if *David* can be so charitably affected towards a cursing *Shimei*, viewing him as an instrument in the hand of God; methinks we may be almost in love with any thing under that notion, and much rather so concerning a poor harmless

harmless Sickness, Let it alone, so let it put us to pain, for God hath sent it. To this sense may a devout soul draw the words of his Saviour concerning the Woman in *Mat. 26. 10.* *Why trouble ye the Woman? she hath wrought a good work upon me:* Why do ye interrupt and disturb this disease? Why do ye fret against this Persecutor? Why do ye repine at this Prison? it executes the will of my God upon me. What though these men pour out their venom in such abundance? What though this disease spend its influences upon my body so plentifully? There's no waste in all this; there's need of just so much; God doth not lavish out his Arrows in vain, nor shoot at rovers, as *Jonathan* did, who couzened his Lad, making him believe he shot at a mark, when he shot at none. A soul overpowred with the sense of Gods Infinite Wisdom in appointing, measuring, timing all afflictions, will easily be reconciled to a poor harmless creature, which is set on, and taken off at his pleasure.

2. When it begets in us a holy

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Acqui-

Acquiescency and resting in God, which is opposed to a larger and disorderly hastening towards deliverance. Then do we indeed own and honour the skill of our Chirurgion, when we do quietly suffer the corrosive plaisters to lie on, and do not offer to pluck them off, notwithstanding the smart they put us to. And surely he that believeth the Infinite Wisdom of God, who knows what, and what manner and measure of correction we stand in need of, will not *make haste* to be delivered from under his hand; but composeth himself quietly; as young *Samuel* laid himself down; and when he was called, answered chearfully, *Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.*

A soul sensible of Gods Infinite Wisdom in this particular, argues thus, Who am I poor worm, shallow creature, that I should contend with Infinite Wisdom about the time or manner of my being in the world? Why did not I also undertake to appoint him the time and place of my being born? Shall I say it is too much, when Infinite Wisdom thinks

it is not enough? Cease wrangling
soul, and be at rest, for the Lord deals
wisely with thee. Such a soul so con-
versing with the all-wise God, dare
freely refer all to him, venture all
with him; if he smite him on *the one*
cheek, he dare *turn to him the other*;
if he take away his Coat, he dare
offer him his Cloak also; if he take
away his liberty, he dare trust him
with his life too; if he smite him in
some of his comforts, he dare turn to
him the rest also; for he knows
that Infinite Wisdom cannot err in
Judgement, nor miscarry in his dispen-
sations.

Secondly, *God knoweth when, and
how best to deliver us.* This necessa-
rily follows upon the former. To him
all times, and all things past, present, and
to come, are equally present: In one
single act of understanding, he doth
wonderfully comprehend both causes
and events, sicknesses and cures, afflic-
tions and deliverances. Let the Athe-
istical world cry, These are they that are
forsaken, whom no man careth for;
there is no hope for them in their

God, as their manner is to blaspheme. Still the promise stands unrepealed in both Testaments, I will never leave you, nor forsake you: though the case be never so extreme and desperate, still the Apostles word holds good, *2 Pet.* 2. 9. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations. If all passages be blockt up, he will rather make a gap in the Sea, than his people shall not escape, *Exod.* 14. And this way and time of Gods delivering, is the most excellent, suitable, and certain, as might abundantly appear in many particulars: But that would be a digression. In the general, be assured that Gods way is the best way of deliverance, and his time is also the best time. He that sits as a *Refiner of Silver*, knows how, and when to take out the metal, that it be purified, and not hurt. Here I might enter into a large discourse, and shew you how the judgement of man is ordinarily deceived, and his expectations disappointed, which he had built upon creature probabilities, when in the mean time the purpose of
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of God takes place in a far better and more comformable deliverance of his servants. But it may suffice to have hinted it only.

Our duty is to converse with this Instance of Divine Wisdom by the exercises of *Patience* and *Hope*. If God seem to tarry long, yet wait patiently for his appearance; for he will appear in the most acceptable time, and *in the end ye shall consider it*, and acknowledge it. Take heed of limiting the Holy One of *Israel*, as that murmuring generation did, *Psal. 78. 41*. Take heed of fixing of your deliverance to such or such a train and series of causes which you have laid in your own heads, and of engaging God to act by your Method. If God be a wise Agent, its fit he should be a free Agent too. Bear up Christian soul, faint not when thou art rebuked of him; *Cast thy burden upon the Lord*, and he will in due time, find out a way either of lessening it, or removing it. You have heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the end of the Lord, *James 5. 11*. Be you patient, and you shall see it too; a

better end than ever you could have accomplished by your own art or industry. In the mean time, cherish in your hearts a lively hope of an happy issue : For your lives and comforts are all hid in him, in whom also are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. As the consideration of Infinite Wisdom, in knowing how, and when best to deliver us, may settle our hearts, that they do not rise up as a foam upon the waters through impatience ; so it may bear up our hearts, that they do not sink within us, as a stone in the waters, through desperation.

Thirdly, *God knoweth how to make the best use of all for our good.* I say, of all, both of the affliction, the manner and measure of it, of his delay, and of the season which he chuses to redeem us in. He can make *Paul's* imprisonment turn to his advantage, *Phil. 1. 19.* *Job's* captivity to redound to his far greater state, *Job ult.* *Joseph's* banishment, to make him great ; and *Manasse's*, to make him good. This is a large Theme, and therefore I dare not
 rise

rifle into it particularly. Take all in one word from the Apostle, *Rom. 8.28.* *All things do work together for good to them that love God.* What ever the premises be, the only wise God knows how to draw a happy conclusion from them. Get a firm belief of this radiated in your hearts, and converse with the Wisdom of God in this instance of it by the great Grace of *Self-resignation.* The Sovereignty of God may well work us into a resignation of our interests, and comforts, and concernments to him: But this Infinite Wisdom of God ought in reason to work us into a resignation even of our very wills unto him. Oh this debasing of self-will, this self-resignation is a noble and ingenuous act of a pious soul (for so I dare call him in whom it is found) whereby it honours God greatly in all that comes upon it. A godly soul considering it self ignorant of many things, burdened with many corruptions, and clogg'd with an animal body, senses, appetite, fancy, which are alwayes calling for things inconvenient, if not unlawful,

doth conclude it would not be good for it to be at its own finding, or caring, or carving : and duly eying that infinite mind and understanding, who in a wonderfull, unaccountable manner, orders all things, and all events to the best and certain issue, is so mastered by, and indeed enamoured with the sense of it ; that he renounces his own wisdom, and throws out his own clamorous will, and complies readily with the all-wise God. This is truly to converse with the Wisdom of God, when we do out of choice refer ourselves to it, and rowl our selves upon it. Every bare acknowledgement of Divine Wisdom is not a proper conversing with it ; but when the same is wrought into the soul, and the lively sense of it doth so over-power the heart, that the will is prepared to close readily with such Methods as God shall please to use to accomplish his own ends ; then do we properly, and feelingly converse with God, under the notion of the All-wise God. But this of Self-religation, I spoke something to under the first head ;

head; and much of that which is spoken there, may be indifferently applyed hither. Therefore,

7. *Converse with the unbounded Goodness, Love, and Mercy of God.* God is infinitely and unchangeably loving and mercifull to his people: he is *good*, saith the Psalmist, and he is *Love*, saith the Apostle, 1 John 4. 8. Those dreadful and terrifying apprehensions which men have of the blessed and good God, as if he were some austere and surly Majesty, given to passion and reverage, are apt to destroy that chearfull and ingenuous converse with him, which the creature should maintain with its Creator at all times: But then are we most prone to entertain those apprehensions, and to harbour such unseemly notions of him, when he appears in the way of his judgements, when we take a view of him in the ruines of our comforts, the blood of our friends, the spoyl of our goods, and in the distresses of our lives. We are apt to
frame

frame notions of God according to what we find in our own disposition, to fancy a God like unto our selves; and therefore we cannot eye an afflicting God, but we presently conclude an angry God; as though the Eternal and Pure Being were subject to passions and changes, as we are. These apprehensions being once drunk into the soul, it becomes unhinged presently, and almost afraid to behold the face of love it self, but flies and hides it self, as *Adam* in the Garden: or if the soul do converse with God at all, it is as a City that is besieged converses with the enemy without, viz. sending out to seek peace, and to obtain a cessation of Arms. And so a soul may bestow much upon God, surrender up the Castle, give him all that he hath almost, not for any love that he bears to him; but as *Joash* gave *Hazael* a present of gold and precious things, to hire him to depart from him, *2 Kin.* 12. 18. Oh then they will up and do any thing; yea, circumcise their lives, as *Zipporah* circumcised her Son, *Exod.* 4. 25. to escape the hands of an angry

angry God. Every one will converse with God as an enemy in time of extremity; hang out a flag for peace, send presents, pay a homage, send Embassadors, to entreat his face: But few know how to converse with the Goodness and Mercy of God, with him as their dear and only friend in a time of affliction, freely and cheerfully. Now there seems to be a double account to be given of mens not conversing with the Goodness and Mercy of God in the time of afflictions.

1. *Many cannot believe the Mercy and Kindness of God, when he is in the way of his Judgements.* If it be so, why am I thus? cries the poor soul, struggling under its burden, and traveling in pangs to be delivered of its griefs. Thus unbelievingly argues Gideon (who was otherwise famous for faith) in the time of his bitter bondage under the Midianites, *Judg.* 6. 13. when an Angel from Heaven was sent to assure him of the good will of God towards him, he could not entertain the news, nor believe the
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the report, because of the anguish of his soul, but cries out, *Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why is all this evil befallen us?* No, the Lord hath forsaken us; for he hath delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. The sad soul is ready to cry concerning Christs gracious presence, as the two Sisters concerning his personal presence, *Jeb. 11. 21, 32. Lord, if thou hadst been here, my Brother had not dyed: Lord, if thou hadst been here, if thou hadst loved me, if thou hadst had any delight in me, my Brother had not dyed, my Husband, my Wife, my Children had not dyed; I had not been thus plagued, afflicted, wounded, tormented as I am.* Hence we have those many complaints of the afflicted soul, up and down the Psalms; *Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? Is his Mercy clean gone? Hath he shut up his tender Mercies in anger?* and many such like. The smart of our senses, is apt to pervert the judgement of our minds; and the sense of bodily evils, is ready to destroy all sense of the Infinite and Unchangeable Goodness and Love

Love of God. Now this great evil seems to arise from these two causes, viz. *Our measuring of God and his Divine Dispositions, by our selves and humane passions and affections, as I hinted before: And our measuring the Love of God too much by the proportion that he gives us of worldly prosperity.* Woe to him in a day of distress, that was wont to judge of Divine Love by the things that are before him, as Solomon calls the things of this world, *Eccles. 9. 1.* This, I say, is the temper, the infirmity of many in the time of afflictions: though indeed there be no reason for it. For why should we conclude harshly concerning *Job* upon the dunghill, any more than we would conclude charitably concerning *Abab* on the Throne? Besides, the Scripture teacheth expressly, that the Love of God doth stand with correction, *Psal. 89. 33.* I will visit his iniquity, but my loving kindness will I not take from him: Nay, it seems as if it could not well stand without it, *Heb. 12. 6.* *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth.*

2. Others

2. Others do indeed believe the Goodness and Mercy of God to them in a time of affliction, but either they cannot, or dare not, or will not converse with it, nor take comfort in it. They remember God with the Psalmist, *Psal. 77. 3. i. e. the Goodness, Bounty, Mercy of God* (saith *Malletus*) and yet at the same time are troubled; their hearts are unquiet, fluctating, tumultuous within them. The soul is so impress'd with the sense of sin which it hath contracted from the consideration of its sufferings, that it dare not presume to meddle with Mercy; but though this Mercy of God be its own, yet it is ready to think that it is a duty to forsake its own Mercies, as though it heard God chiding it in the words of *Jehu to Joram's scour*, *2 King. 9. 18. What hast thou to do with peace? What hast thou to do with Mercy? turn ye behind me.* An afflicted soul hath much ado to believe it to be a duty to converse with the Goodness and Love of God in a time of affliction. It easily agrees to converse with the Justice, Holiness, and

and Power of God indeed; but thinks it very improper; and unseasonable, if not unsafe, to converse with his Mercy. It is ready to cry with *Solomon* presently, *In the day of prosperity joyce, but in the day of adversity consider*: or with the Apostle, *If any be afflicted, let him pray*; if he be merry, let him sing Psalms. Conversing with the Goodness of God seems not to be a duty of this season. I confess this is a high and hard duty. Every smatterer in Religion will cry out in his affliction, *Thou art just and righteous, O Lord*: But, *Thou art good and merciful*: Blessed be the name of the Lord, is the voice of a *Jah* only, *Job* 1. 21. But it is a duty, though a hard one; and affording much pleasure and contentment to them that are exercised therein. That the kindness and benignity of God doth not fail, that his Love is not broken off from his people; no, nor suspended neither, when he afflicts them most, is most certain. For, though he worketh changes, in and upon us, yet himself is eternally and unchangeably the same;

same, *Jer.* 1. 17. And though some of his dealings towards his people seem to be rough and severe, yet if we judge rightly of them, they are all Mercy and Truth towards them that keep his Covenant, *Psal.* 15. 10. And that the people of God ought to converse with this Divine Love and Mercy even in their greatest afflictions, is as clear: To this purpose I might alledge the forequoted example of holy *Job*; and might enforce this Doctrine from the Apostles words, *Phil.* 4. 4. and *Jam.* 1. 2. *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*; and from many good Reasons too, if it were needfull. I know indeed that it is a hard thing to keep up a right frame towards, and converse rightly with the Righteousness, and Goodness of God at the same time; the one frame is ready to juggle out the other. Sorrow is apt to contract the heart, and destroy the large and chearful temper of it: And joy doth dilate and enlarge it, and is ready to make it forget its grief: But though it be hard, yet it is possible: These two may well consist
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in the same soul, according to that in *Psal. 2. 11.* — *Rejoyce with trembling.*

But how must we converse with the Love and Mercy of God in the time of afflictions? I have partly prevented my self in this already; but I shall speak a little more distinctly of it. We do not then converse with the Goodness and Mercy of God, when we barely think of it, or acknowledge it: But,

1. *When we believe and apply it, and take to our selves the comforts of it.* When we look through the clouds that are round about us, and quite cover us, and by the eye of faith behold the Fountain and Father of Light: when we can look beyond the frowns that are in his face, and the Rod that is in his hand, and see the good will that dwells in the heart of God towards us. More especially,

2. *When we do not only see and believe it, but also draw virtue and influences down from it into our souls, to establish, settle, and satisfie them.* Not so much when we see it, as when we taste

taste it ; when we feel the Sun of Righteousness warm us, though it do not dazzle us ; and though we cannot perceive it to shine upon us, yet we find it to shine in us. We do then converse with the Love and Mercy of God in an afflicted state, when the same doth bear us up, not only from utter sinking, but even from inordinate sorrowing ; when we draw a vertue from it into our souls to sustain them, yea and to cherish them too. Thus *Job* comforts himself in his living Redeemer, *Job* 19. 25. and the Psalmist in the Mercy of God, even when he was ready to slip, *Psal.* 94. 18, 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* In a word, we converse with Divine Goodness, when we are really warmed with it ; and with Almighty Love, when we rejoyce in it, and can with holy venturousness, and humble confidence, throw our selves into the very bosome of it : when we receive impressions of it from the Spirit of God, and are thereby molded into a temper suitable to it, and becoming it.

it. For then indeed do we most happily converse with the Love and Goodness of God, when we for our part do live upon it ; when we being assured of an interest in a loving and good God, do render up our selves also unto him, in the most beautiful and becoming affections of Love, Joy, Confidence, and holy Delight. This is an excellent frame ; and, sure I am, it is much for our interest, thus to converse with God in the time of our afflictions. It is a high way of glorifying God, and bringing much credit to Religion : And indeed he that keeps up this frame, can be afflicted but in part ; he escapes the greater half of the evil : For though it be never so stormy a time without him, a storm upon his house, upon his goods, upon his relations, yea upon his own body ; yet it is a calm day within ; in the soul there is peace and tranquillity.

Lastly (and indeed everlastingly too) we are to converse with the Infinite, *self-sufficient Fulness of God*, in a day of the greatest extremity : that is, as if I should say, not with any one

one single Attribute, but with the very Godhead of God, the immense perfection of God, the Allness of the Deity. Oh how seasonably doth this blessed object present its self to the soul in a time of afflictions, losses, mortalities, persecutions, when we are most emptied of creature-enjoyments, and the emptiness of them doth most appear! for upon these two doth our conversing with God much depend. I need not tell you how apt we are to live beside God, when we have our fill of creature-delights; whilest we can entertain our hearts with a created sweetness, we foolishly forget and neglect the supream good. And so fond and unreasonable is this affection, that no warnings, no precepts will serve the turn; God is forced to break that off from us, from which we would not be broken. Sure I am, the blessed and bountiful God envyes not his servants any of their creature-comforts or delights; but he loves them (as I said before) with a strong and powerful love, and will not suffer them to live so much to their losses, as they do,
when

when they spend noble affections upon transitory things, in the everlasting enjoyment of which they could never be happy. Now afflictions are a negative, if we speak properly, even as sin is; and whenever we are afflicted in any kind, we are emptied of some created good: as poverty is nothing but the absence of riches: sickness the want of ease, of order, of health in the constitution: restraint is the loss of liberty, &c. So then it appears, that in a time of affliction, God is emptying us of creature-enjoyment: for indeed afflict on it self is little or nothing else but such an emptying or deprivation. And that then the emptiness of the creature doth most appear, I suppose all will grant. The sick person looks upon his decayed strength, and withering members, and is feelingly convinc'd of the truth of the Scripture, — *All flesh is grass.* Another casts about his eyes with *Sampson*, and sees *heaps upon heaps*, and cries out like one that feels the weight of his own words, *Childhood and youth are vanity*: or alas how soon is the
desire

desire of ones eyes taken away with a stroke! Another sees his goods carry-
ed away before his face; and his house
on fire before his eyes, and then cries
out, that he hath a real proof of the
vanity of those things, which Solomon
had long ago observed, *Prov. 23. 5.*
*Riches take themselves wings and fly
away as an Eagle towards Heaven.*
Whilst we see the creatures stand, we
will not believe but they are stable;
whilst we see them fair and flourish-
ing, we cannot rightly lay to heart the
withering nature of them: but when
we see them *cut down*, we do then con-
clude they were but *flowers*; when we
see them *flitting*, we conclude they are
shadows: when God *pours* them out
upon the ground, we are then convin-
ced that they were unstable as *waters*:
To shew us what the best of our crea-
ture-enjoyments are, God is forced
to take them quite away, that they be
no more.

Now then in such a case, at such a
time, converse with the Infinite, Self-
sufficient Fulness of God. Oh now
it is seasonable; now it is your duty;
nay

may now it will be your greatest policy ! If that chanel, that creature-chanel be stopt, in which your affections were wont to run too freely ; turn the stream of them into their proper chanel in which they may run freely, and neither ever meet with obstruction, nor ever overflow. Let your soul grow up into acquaintance and union with God by creature-breaches and disappointments. More particularly, converse with the self-sufficient Fulness of God,

1. By the act of *Creature denial*. The eying of an infinite, absolute, uncreated Fulness in a right manner, takes off the soul from all created objects, earthly things: even as the beholding of the Sun in its glory, dazles the eye to all things below. God becomes so great in the eye of the soul, that it cannot see the poor moles of worldly comforts. Give a soul a feeling taste of the infinite sweetness and fulness of the fountain, and its thirst after the poor puddles of the world is presently abated, if not perfectly quenched, according to that of our Saviour, *Jo. 4. 14. Who-*

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soever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; that is, not after any other thing. Like unto which is that Gospel promise, *Isa.* 49. 10. they shall not thirst, who do enjoy these springs of water. When this fountain is opened in the eye of the soul, and the soul begins to taste of it, it longs to drink deeper of that indeed; but as for all other waters, waters of the Cistern, the soul looks upon them as not being, or at least as being bitter, waters of *Marah* in comparison; we do then truly converse with the infinite, self-sufficient Fulness of God, when we look upon all created good with a noble disdain, are content to part with it; or if we do still enjoy it, are resolved to enjoy it only in God, and so look upon it, and love it, only as a beam from the Father of Lights; as a drop of the infinite Fountain of all Perfections. Tell me, Is it not a poor and low thing that many Professors do, who acknowledge and magnifie the uncreated Goodness, the Fulness of God; and yet at the same time do covet and court the creature

ture with all eagerness ; and their worldliness is apparently too hard for their Religion? Methinks I hear God speaking to such seeming friends , as *Dalilah* to *Sampson* , *Judg.* 16. 15. How can ye say, you love me, when your heart is not with me? To these mens hearts, methinks our Saviours Doctrine should strike cold, *Matth.* 6. 21. *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also :* And those words of his beloved Apostle, *1 John* 2. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Let a man pretend and profess what he will; and in words magnifie the Fulness and Sufficiency of God as much as he will; if in the mean time his soul be bound up in the creature, such a mans Religion is vain : nay indeed his profession of God becomes a real reproaching of him, and a blasphemy against Reason it self. Let your low esteem of all created good in comparison of the supreme good, your readiness to quit your title to every creature-comfort, and in the mean time, your care to live beside it, witness

the true and honourable esteem, the true and feeling sense that you have in your hearts of the infinite and self-sufficient Fulness of God. For, however men may make a shift to cheat themselves, God is not truly great in the soul, till all other things become as nothing: neither doth the soul rightly converse with his infinite Fulness, so long as any thing stands in opposition to it, or competition with it.

2. *Converse with the self-sufficient Fulness of God by the grace of Faith:* I mean by that act of it, whereby we do interest our selves, and as it were wrap up our own souls in this Fulness, and make it our own. And herein there is no danger of an humble souls being too bold or venturous: For the Proclamation is full, and the Invitation free, *Isa. 55. 1. Joh. 7. 37. Rev 22. 17.*

— *Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* What *Seneca* sayes of the soul in regard of the divine original of it, may sure be better said of a godly soul, in respect of the Divine Nature, and qualities of it, *illum divina delectant, nec*

ut alienis interest sed ut suis; it doth not converse with things divine, as with an others, but as its own. And indeed we cannot truly and comfortably converse with the Infinite Perfection and Fulness of God, if we have no title to it: but then we converse with God, when we converse with our own God, not an others: when the soul is able to say, All this Fulness of Power, Wisdom, Goodness, is all mine in my head Christ Jesus; for in him *all this Fulness dwells*, Col. 2. 9. and he dwelleth in me; *in him are hid all these treasures*, Col. 2. 3. and *my life also is hid with Christ in God*, as theirs was in Col. 3. 3. You see then, that a soul cannot converse with the Infinite Fulness and Self-sufficiency of God, but by Christ; for it is in and by him that we receive of Divine Fulness, John 1. 16. Hence was that of the devout Father, *Tolle meum, tolle Deum*; to which I may add, *Tolle Jesum, & tollis meum*. The fulness of a fountain is nothing to me, except it be mine. There is bread enough in my Fathers house, sayes the poor Prodigal,

but for all that I perish with hunger : so is there living waters evermore in this uncreated life, this infinite Spring of all Perfection ; yet many souls are choakt with thirst, because the fountain is not theirs ; it is a fountain sealed , as *Solomon* speaks in another case ; *The well is deep*, and they have *nothing to draw with*, as the Woman said concerning another Well, *Job. 4.* Therefore be sure you get an interest in the Fulness and Sufficiency of God ; or as *Solomon* speaks in another case (*Prov. 5. 15.*) Drink waters out of thine own Well.

3. *Converse with the Self-sufficient Fulness of God*, by delighting your selves in it. Drink of this Fountain, *yea drink abundantly ye beloved of God, Canticles 5. 1.* yea, lie down by it, *Psalms 23. 2.* yea, bathe your selves wholly in it ; *Enter into the Joy of your Lord*, lie down in his bosome, spread your selves in his Love and Fulness. The Beloved Disciple leaning upon the breast of his Lord at Supper, was but a dark shadow, a poor scant resemblance of a beloved soul, which by the lovely acts of
Joy

Joy and Confidence, and Delight, layes it self down in the bosome of Jesus, and doth not feed with him, but feed upon him, and his Alsufficiency. Then do we converse indeed feelingly and comfortably with the Infinite Fulness, when the soul is swallowed up in it, doth rest in it, is filled with it, and centred upon it. Oh the noble and free-born spirit of true Religion, that disdaining the pursuit of low and created things, is carryed out with delight to feed, and dwell, and live upon uncreated Fulness! Then is a soul raised to its just altitude, to the very height of its Being, when it can spend all its powers upon the supreme and self-sufficient good, spreading and stretching it self upon God with full contentment, and wrapping up it self entirely in him. This is the souls way of living above losses; and he that so lives, though he may often be a *loser*, yet shall never be *a loss*. He who feeds upon created Goodness or Sweetness, may soon eat himself out of all; the stock will be spent, and (which is worse) the soul will be *dryed up*, that
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hath nothing else to nourish it. But he that lives upon uncreated Fulness, is never at a loss, though he lose never so much of the creature: For who will value the spilling of a dish of water, that hath a well of living water at his door, from whence he had that, and can have more as good, though not the same. Nay, to speak properly, this is the only way to lose nothing. For how can he be properly said to lose any thing, who possesses all things? And so doth he, I am sure, who is filled with the Fulness of God. Be sure therefore, that in the want, in the loss of all things, you live upon the Fountain-fulness, delight your self in the Lord, after the example of the Prophet *Habakkuk*, cap. 3. 17, 18.

I have gone thorough the Doctrinal part of my discourse upon these words, which was the thing I mainly intended. Many Inferences might be drawn from it. But I shall content my self to forbid, and so as it were to remove out of the way, some things

things that hinder this great duty; and so shut up all with one word of Exhortation.

1. *Converse not with creature-comforts*, the poor, low, and scant enjoyments of this world: For so I may well call them, though they be never so *high* in the *opinion* of them that have them, and never so *large* as to the *proportion* that any one hath of them: They are low in comparison of that high and supreme good for which the soul was made; and scant as to any real happiness, or satisfaction that they can possibly give. For indeed those sensual and sensual souls that take up their rest and happiness most in them, are not properly satisfied, but surfeited; not filled, but for the present glutted with them. There are many unlawful, and hurtful ways of the souls conversing with created comforts: I will not run thorow them all, as not intending any large discourse upon these heads. *Converse not with them*, fondly delighting in them, and doating upon them: especially take heed of this when God is shaking his Rod over

any of them. Doth God arise and begin to plead with you in judgement, laying his hand upon any of these, and threatening to take them from you? Oh then *hands off*! touch them not. What an unseemly, and indeed monstrous sight is it to see a creature pulling and tugging against his Creator, and maintaining his supposed right against Heaven it self! Is it for a Heaven-born soul to stand gazing and doating upon, or passionately weeping over created friends, carnal liberty, corporal health, houses made with hands, things below God, yea and below its self too! Pore not too much upon them; value them only in God, and refer them freely to him. If you can say, you have any thing of your own, make much of it, and spare not: But give unto God the things that are Gods, and by that time you have done so, I shink you need not dote upon what's left. We ought indeed at all times to enjoy all our creature comforts with hearts loosened from them: but if formerly our hearts have been too much joyned to them, it is time now to loosen them.

2. Con-

2. Converse not with creature-causes in a time of Affliction. This is a strange kind of Atheistical temper, into which we are very prone to fall: I speak properly, when I say [Fall;] for it is indeed a falling down from God in our hearts, in whose Infinite Essence all creature-causes are lapt up; and in whose hand the several successes and events of them all do lie. Let a beast that judges by sense, kick at the poor thorn that pricks him: But let rational souls fix upon the highest and supreme Agent, who in an infinite, powerfull and skilfull manner, uses what creature he will, for what end he will, and sends it of an errand which it self knows not. Why do we run hunting poor Partridge-instruments upon the mountains of contemplation? Shall the noble faculties of an immortal soul spend themselves upon such an inquisition? or is it just to pursue an innocent creature out of breath for being an instrument in the hand of God? to quarrel with the Sword, because it suffered its self to be drawn; or beat the Air, because it

is infected? This were indeed to go out with the King of *Israel*, with much warlike preparation, to catch Fleas. I deny not but that wise men may look into second causes, and make many profitable Observations from them, both for present, and future; and all men may and ought to learn many wholesome lessons even from the instrument that afflicts them: But sure I am, a godly man will not dwell upon these; he will not fix here, but readily resolve all into an higher cause, and so falls to converse with that: Much less will he blame or murmur at a poor harmless Arrow, that flew no further than it was shot, nor pierced no deeper than it was bidden. Yea, though the second cause were a sinful cause, a rational Agent, and so consequently acted by malicious and evil principles; yet a godly soul knows how to distinguish upon him, and his action: he hates him as a sinner; but comports well enough with him as Gods instrument: and though he condemns his action as it varies from Gods command, yet he approves of it as being ordered by

by Gods hand and counsel. *David* hated cursing as much as any man; yet did he so eye the hand of God in every thing, and comply with it too, that there was a time when he said concerning *Shimei*, *So let him curse.* Concerning this I hinted something before under another head. Therefore,

3. *Converse not with creature-cures, creature-relief.* These may indeed be lookt out after, and safely made use of when they are found: Nay, I will add further, that they are to be sought diligently, and used carefully. They that know the Infinite Sovereignty, Power and Wisdom of God, will not tye him to means, much less to these or those particular means: But on the other hand, they that understand Gods usual and ordinate way of acting and governing, and upholding the world, will not tye him up from means; no, nor expect that he should appear for their relief immediately and miraculously. Though if any one have a miraculous faith truly grounded upon some special and particular

ticular Promise, I will not contend with him : only I would desire to see his miraculous faith justified by some miraculous works, which I conceive do alwayes attend it. But the converse with creature-cures which I forbid, is the immoderate seeking of them, or the inordinate using of them. To seek after means in themselves unlawful, can never become lawfull : But I speak not of these. For, although some are come to that height of Atheism and abjuration of God, as to retain the Devil himself for a counsel in a time of straits, as *Saul* did ; and contract with the Prince of death for the preservation of life in time of sickness, as *Ahaziah* did : And I doubt very many do fall into acquaintance with that evil spirit, and receive assistance from him before they be well aware, by meddling with unphysical, unscriptural, unwarrantable cures : yet the greatest danger is not in these : *in licitis perimus omnes*, the greatest danger is of miscarrying about things in themselves lawfull. And that is chiefly by those two
ways

wayes which I named but now. Take heed therefore of immoderate seeking after created helps. Be not anxious, perplexed, tormented in mind by a passionate desire of any of these. Oh what a raging and unquenchable thirst have many men after creature-cures ! They will move Heaven and Earth, and almost Hell too (with her in the Poet) but they will find out relief. Give me a Physician, or I dye, sayes one ; Give me Trading, good Markets, a plentiful Crop , or I am undone, sayes another. What man, is thy life lapt up in a pill, or incorporated into a potion ? Is thy main happines in the abundance of these things here below ? or wilt thou say to the wind, Blow here in this quarter, and nowhere else ; tye up the supream and free Agent to a form and method of working ? Let not such a prophane disposition be found amongst us. Again, if you have found out hopefull creature-cures, take heed of using them in an inordinate manner, laying stress upon them, *looking earnestly on them*, as though they by
their

their own power and proper virtue could make the lame to walk, or the sick to recover. Eye not, much less depend upon the virtue of any created means as distinct from God. But acknowledge the power, and virtue, and goodness of every created Being, to be the power, and virtue, and goodness of God in that creature; and so consequently use it in subordination and subserviency to the supream cause, who can at pleasure let loose or suspend the influences and virtues of every such means.

4. *Converse not with creature-losses* in a time of affliction. The sinfull soul that hath straggled off from God, and centred upon the creature, is alwaies intemperate and restless: If it be disappointed in its converse with creature-cures, and sees that for all these, his comforts are cut off, health, liberty, friends, are perished; then he falls to converse with his losses, and spends the powers of his soul in discontent, complaints, and many dismal passions. Oh then, alas, I am undone! *What shall I do for the hundred talents!*

*talents ! I am the only man that hath seen affliction ; no sorrow like unto my sorrow : I shall go softly all my dayes, for the joy of my heart is perished, the delight of my eyes is cut off. Thus Rachel weeps for her children, and will not be comforted : Rizpah attends the carcases of her Sons, and will not be parted from them, 2 Sam. 21. It is a strange thing that a soul should live upon its losses : And yet how many do so ! Their very soul cleaveth to the dust, where their creature comforts are interred ; whose souls are so much bound up in the creature, that they will needs live and dye together with them. If God smite the Guard, and make it to wither, *Jonah* droops, and will needs dye too, *Jonah* 4. 8, 9. If *Joseph* be missing a while, *Jacob* will not be comforted ; no, he will go down into the grave unto his Son mourning, *Gen.* 37. 35. Who would have thought to have heard such words, from such wise men, as a Prophet and a Patriarch ! Oh the strange and unbounded power which this unseemly creature-love hath obtained*

obtained over the best of men ! which makes me call him a happy man, almost more than a man, a compeer of Angels, who hath learnt to converse with God alone. Well, converse not with creature-losses ; let not your soul take up its lodging by the carkasses of your created-comforts, with *Rizpah* ; dwell not upon the lowest round of the ladder, but climb up by it to the meaning of God, and to some higher good, and more excellent attainment. They live to their loss, who live upon their losses ; who dwell upon the dark side of the dispensation : For every dark Providence hath one bright side, wherein a godly soul may take comfort, if he be not wanting to himself.

5. *Converse not with flesh and blood.* By flesh and blood, I suppose the Apostle means no more than men, *Gal. 1. 16*. And indeed, if we confer with men only for counsel, and repair to men only for comfort in a time of affliction, we shoot short of the mark. But by flesh and blood the Scripture elsewhere often means, man in this
his

his animal state, as he is in his corruptible, mortal body ; as 1 Cor. 15. 50. and many other places. And in this sense I speak, when I say Converse not with flesh and blood. Judge not according to your senses ; let not your own sensual appetite determine what is good or evil, sweet or bitter : Consult with rectified Reason, and not with brutish appetite ; confer with Faith, and not with Fancy. Rectified Reason will judge that to be really good, which our sensual appetite distasts : An enlightened mind will judge that to make for the interest of the soul, and its eternal *happy state*, which sense judges hurtful to the interest of the body, and its *animal state*. It is not possible there should be any order, nor consequently any peace or rest in that soul, where the inferior faculties domineer over the superiour, and sensitive powers Lord it over the intellectual ; and where raging appetite, and extravagant fancy must clamour up into the throne to determine cases, and right Reason must stoop and bow before it.

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Be admonished to fly converse with all these, if you would converse rightly, purely, properly, comfortably with God, which is the highest office and attainment of created nature. Consider what I have said concerning this excellent and high employment; and awaken your souls, and all the powers of them to meet the Lord God, and converse with him aright in the way of his judgements. Converse with God, with God in Christ, with God in his promises, with God in his attributes, and labour to do it not speculatively, notionally, but really, practically, according as I have directed in the foregoing discourse. Religion is not an empty, airy, notional thing; it is not a matter of thinking, nor of talking; but it hath a real existence in the soul, and doth as really distinguish, though not specifically, one man from another, as Reason distinguishes all men from beasts: Converse with God is set out in Scripture, by *living*, and *walking*, and the like. Let me inculcate this thing therefore again, and press it upon you, and I shall finish all. As the way

way of glorifying God in the world, is not by a meer thinking of him, or entertaining some notion of his glory into our heads, but consists in a real participation of his image, in a God-like disposition, and holy conversation, according to that of our Saviour, *Joh. 15. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, &c.* So the way of conversing with God in his several attributes, is not a thinking often with our selves, and telling one another that God is just, wise, merciful, &c. though this be good: But it is a drinking in the virtue and value of these divine perfections, a working of them into the soul; and on the other hand, the souls rendering of it self up to God in those acts of Grace which do suit with such attributes, as in water, face answereth face. I do not call bare performance of duties a conversing with God: Prayer and Meditation, &c. are excellent means in and by which our soul converses with God; but communion with God is properly somewhat more spiritual, real, powerful and divine, according as I described it just now. As for example;
The

The soul receives the impressions of divine *Sovereignty* into it, and gives up it self unto God in the Grace of *Self-denial*, and humble subjection. The soul receives the communications of divine *Fulness* and Perfection, and entertains the same with *Delight* and *Complacency*; and, as it were, grows full in it. Even as the communications of the virtues of the Sun are answered with life, and warmth, and growth in the plants of the earth: So a souls conversing with the attributes of God, is not an empty notion of them, or a dry discourse concerning them, but a *Reception of Impressions* from them, and a *Reciprocation* to them: The effluxes of these from God, are such as do beget reflections in man towards God. This is to know Christ, to grow up in him into all things according to that in 1 *John* 3. 6. Who-soever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.



A Farewell to Life.

2 COR. 5.6.

ἐνδημῶντες ἐν τῷ σώματι, ἐνδημῶμεν
ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου. *Whilst we are at
home in the body, we are absent
from the Lord.*

THE holy Apostle having
in the first verse of this
Chapter layd down the
Doctrine of Eternal
Glory, which shall fol-
low upon this transi-
tory life of Believers, shews in the
following verses how he himself long-
ed within himself, and groaned after
that happy state : And then proceeds
to give a double ground of this his
confident

confident expectation; one in *vers. 5.* therefore is the Apostle confident concerning the putting off of this mortal body, because God had wrought and formed him for this state of glory, and already given him an *earnest* of it, even his holy Spirit: The other ground of the confidence and settledness of his mind as to his desires of a change, is taken from his present state in the body, which was but poor and uncomfortable in comparison of that glorious state: This in the words of the Text, *Therefore we are alwayes confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.* For I do not take the words [we are confident] concerning the Apostles resolvedness with a quiet and sober mind to suffer any kind of persecution or affliction whatever; but *we are alwayes confident, i. e.* we do with confidence expect, or at least we are alwayes well satisfied, contented, well resolved in our minds concerning our departure out of this life: For the Apostle was speaking, not of afflictions or persecutions in the former verses,

verses, but indeed of death; which he calls a dissolving of the earthly house of this tabernacle, *verse 1.* and a being cloathed upon with our house which is from Heaven, *vers. 2. 4.* Yes, and thus the Apostle explains himself, *verse 8.* where he tells you what he means by this his confidence, *we are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body;* where the latter words are exegetical to the former, *q. d.* It is better to be with the Lord, than in this mortal body; but we cannot be with the Lord, whilst we are in this body, it keeps us from him, therefore we have the confidence to part with it. It is the reason of the Apostles confidence and willingness to part with the body, that I am to speak of; and the reason is, because this body keeps him from his Lord, — *whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.* The words are a Metaphor, and are to be translated thus, *we, indwelling in the body, do dwell out from the Lord;* which our Translation renders well, taking little notice of the Metaphor, *whilst we are at*

G home

home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. Though indeed if they had left out that word [*at home*] it would have been as well, and so have neglected the Metaphor altogether, as we may haply hint hereafter. The words are a reason of the Apostles willingness to be dissolved, and do contain a kind of an accusation of the body, and so seem to lay a blame upon it, and upon this animal life; which must be remembered. Now for the former phrase of being at home in the body, it is easily understood, and generally (I think) agreed upon, to be no more than whilst we carry about with us this corruptible flesh, whilst we live this natural animal life. It only signifies man in his compounded animal state, ἀνθρώπου ὁ πολὺς, and doth not at all allude to his sinful, unregenerate or carnal state. But the latter phrase [*Absent from the Lord*] is capable of a double sense, both good and true; and I think both fit enough to the context and drift of the Apostle. I shall speak to both, but insist most upon the latter.

I. Whilst

1. Whilst we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord, *i. e.* from the bodily presence of the Lord in Heaven, absent from Christ Jesus and his glory: And so the words are the same in sense with 1 Cor. 15. 50. *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God: for by flesh and blood there, must needs be meant man in this animal corruptible state.* And so the Apostle accuses this kind of life in the body; and, as it were, blames it for standing between him and his glorified Lord; and so consequently between him and the glory of his Lord. And this sense doth well agree with what went before, and with what follows. The Apostle hath a great mind to deparr; for whilst he is in the body, he is absent from his perfect happiness: For this is the consummation of a Christians happiness, to be with the Lord, to be admitted to a beholding of his infinite glory; as appears by our Saviours earnest prayer for this, *Joh. 17. 24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* Besides,

if we shall see him as he is, we must also needs be made like unto him, 1 John 3. 2. else how can we be fit to live for ever in his presence. Now are we kept from this seeing and beholding of the Lord in glory, by this animal life: It stands between us and the Crown, between us and our Masters Joy, between us and the perfect enjoyment of God. To be with the Lord, is a state of perfect freedom from sin. No unclean thing shall, or can enter into Heaven, Rev. 21. 27. A perfect freedom from all manner of afflictions, Rev. 21. 4. *There shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain,* and ἀδελφὸν, ὅμοιότης αἰῶνα, all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes: A state of freedom from all temptations to sin: For a tempting Devil, and all tempting lusts shall be cast out for ever: A state of perfect peace without the least disturbance from within, or from without: of perfect joy, that shall neither have end nor abatement; and of perfect holiness, when the whole soul shall be enlarged and raised to know, and love, and enjoy the blessed God

God as much as created nature is capable. This is the happy state of seeing God, of being with the Lord: And it is thy corruptible body, this animal life that interposes between us and it, so that the Apostle is confident, and rather willing to depart and be with the Lord, than stay here and be without him.

2. Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, without any reference to the world to come; and so it may be fitly translated *distant* from the Lord, estranged from God: This agrees well with the context; and scope of the Apostle also. And thus the words are also a good ground of the Apostles resolution and willingness to dye, *q. d.* I am willing to be absent from this body; for whilst I am in it, I find my self to be at a great distance from God. And indeed the word *ἐκδημιῶν* signifies properly *to be at a distance*, or to be estranged: So I find it interpreted by a learned Critick, without any mysterie, (as he speaks) of the distance that even Believers themselves stand at from God in
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this

this life. And in this sense I shall chuse to prosecute the words. In which sense the Apostle blames this body and animal life, because it keeps us at a distance from God; is a clog, a snare, a fetter, a pinion to the soul. And so the words do agree in sense with those of our Saviour, *Mat. 26. 41. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*; where by the [*flesh*] must needs be understood the body, if we consider the context, viz. the occasion upon which the words were spoken, the sleepiness of the Apostles; or if we consider the propriety of speech according to the style of the New Testament: True indeed, the corruption of nature is sometimes called *Flesh*; but according to that way of speaking, our Saviour would rather have said, That the spirit was willing, but the flesh was strong; as he saith elsewhere, That the *strong man* armed kept the house. Now to explain this Doctrine a little; *That even the godly themselves, whilst they are in this body, are at a distance from the Lord*: It must be granted, that the godly soul is nigh unto God.

God, even whilst it sojourns in this mortal body, and tottering flesh. All souls are involved in the Apostasie of *Adam*, and are fallen down from God, have alike stragled from their God, and are sunk into self and the creature: God opened a way for their return by the blood of Jesus: for we owe it unto Christs death, not only that God is *reconciled to us* pardoning our sins, but that any of our natures become *reconciled to God*, by accepting of him as our God, and loving him as the chiefest good. Now there is a double being brought nigh to God by Christ. The first is more general, external; and, as I may say, relational: Thus the partition-wall being broken down, the Gentiles that were converted from their Idolatry, to a profession of God and Christ, and admitted to a communion with the Visible Church, are upon that account said to be *Brethren* to the rest of Gods Children, 1 *Cor.* 5. 11. and as to the Church, they are said to be *within it*, *vers.* 12. though at the same time they were *Fornicators, Co-*

venous Drunkards: And as to God, they are said to be *made nigh*, Ephes. 2. 13. A professing of God is said to be a being nigh to him; and even an external performance is said to be a drawing nigh to him; and so *Nadab* and *Abihu*, even in the offering of strange fire, are said to have drawn nigh to God, *Levit.* 10. 3. And this, though it be a priviledge, yet it is not that honourable priviledge of the truly godly souls, who are by Christ Jesus raised up to God in their hearts, and reconciled to him in their natures, and united to him in their affections, and so are made nigh unto him in a more especial and spiritual manner. Thus all sinfull and wicked souls, notwithstanding all their profession and performances, are far from God, estranged from the life of God. Enmity and dissimilitude are the most real distance from God: And truly God-like souls only are nigh unto him; they dwell in him, and he dwelleth in them as in his most proper Temple. As to any kind of Apposition, no man can draw nigh to God, nor by any local accession;

sion ; for so all men are alike nigh to him who is every where, and the worst as well as the best of men do live and move in him : But they are really nigh unto God, who do enjoy him ; and they only enjoy him, whose natures are conformable to him in a way of love, goodness, and God-like perfecti- ons. We do not enjoy God by any gross and external conjunction with him, but we enjoy him, and are nigh unto him by an internal union ; “ when a Divine Spirit informeth and “ acteth our souls, and derives a Di- “ vine Life into them, and thorough “ them : And so a godly soul only is really and happily nigh unto God. Thus the Apostle *Paul*, I believe, was as nigh unto God as any man in the world, who did not only live and move in God, as all men do (though few understand it) but God did even live, and, as it were breathe in him : the very life that he lived was *by faith in the Son of God*, Gal. 2. 20. For, though he walked *in* the flesh, yet he did not walk *after* the flesh, 2 Cor. 10. 3. And yet this gracious soul, even as all other

believers, was at a distance from God; and that not so much by reason of his creatureship; for of that he doth not speak (so the very Angels of God are at an infinite distance from God) but by reason of this mortal body, and animal life, which hindred him from being so nigh to God, as his soul was capable to be, ——— whilst we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord, i. e. at a great distance from God.

1. We are distant from God as to that Knowledge which we shall have of him. Philosophical Divines speak of a threefold Knowledge, 1. κατὰ παρρησίαν, an essential Knowledge of God. This is that unspeakable light, whereby the Divine Nature comprehends its own essence, wherein God seeth himself. 2. κατ' ἐπιστήμην, by Science. This man is capable of this life. But this kind of knowing of God by way of Science, is but a low and dry thing, common to good and bad, men and Devils; and is indeed the perfection of the learned, more than of the godly. 3. And this kind of Knowledge of God, the

“ the glorified soul will reckon but like
 “ a Fable, or a Parable, when it shall be
 “ once swallowed up in God, feasting
 “ upon truth it self, and seeing God in
 “ the pure rayes of his own divinity.

3. *καὶ νόησιν*, or by Intuition : this man cannot attain to in this life, in its perfection, because it arises from a blisful union with God himself, which is in this animal state imperfect. This in the Platonick phrase is *ἐπαφή τοῦ νοητοῦ*, a contact of God, and in Scripture language, a beholding of God face to face, which we are not capable of in this animal concrete state. So may the answer of God to *Moses* be understood, when he besought God to shew him his glory, *Exod. 33. 18. i. e.* to imprint a distinct Idea of his Divine Essence upon his mind, *vers. 20. No man can see me and live ; i. e.* no man in this corruptible state and animal life is capable of seeing me as I am, to apprehend my Divine Essence, to see my face. The Vision of God is not in this life, but in the other ; so that a man must dye before he can thus know God. This is the exposition of Jewish Doctors,

A Farewell to Life.

Doctors, and our learned Country-men do approve it also. This blessed Knowledge of God we are at a distance from whilst we are in this body : so the Apostle plainly, *1 Cor. 13. 12. Now we see darkly as thorough a glass,* but the time will come when we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. Now our body principally hinders the operation of our minds, when they do exercise themselves about the nature of God, whilst it presents its fancies, and gross imaginations to the soul ; so it becomes as it were, a vail upon the face of the soul, draws a cloud, and casts a mist over its eyes, that it cannot discern distinctly, nor judge properly and spiritually. And with allusion to this, that passage of the Apostle is proper and significant, we see as
“ *thorow a glass,* which glass is indeed
“ continually sullied and darkened
“ whilst we look into it by the breath-
“ ing of our animal fancies and ima-
“ ginations upon it. Not only those
stinking fogs of pride and self-
love, and other finfull corruptions
that do arise out of, the soul it self,
do

do hinder our right perceptions of God, (as the earth sends out vapors out of it self, which arise and interpose between it self and the Sun) but even the animal fancy casts in its phantasms and imaginations as a mist before the eye of the soul, which through Divine Grace hath been somewhat enlightened, and cleared from its inbred sinful humours. Though corruption in the mind be as a rheume in its eye, so that it cannot well see; yet that doth not hinder, but that the fancy by presenting its unspiritual imaginations, doth also cast a mist before it, that it cannot see well, nor judge rightly; and so it is either held in gross ignorance, or lapses into error. But in the Regeneration this sense either shall not be, or shall be pure and spiritual.

2. Whilst we are in the body, we are distant from God, as to that *service* which we ought to perform to him in the world. And herein it were endless to run thorow all those outward duties which we owe unto God in the body; and to shew how the
body

body becomes a hinderance either to them, or in them. Though the soul be made willing and forward, by a divine principle implanted in it, yet the body remains a body, a weak and sluggish instrument; and so it will be whilst it is animal; it will go down into the dust a *weak* body, 1 Cor. 15. 43. What man ever had a more willing and chearful heart than *Moses* the friend of God? Yet his hands were *heavy*, and ready to hang down, *Exod.* 17. 12. Shall I instance in the excellent duty of Preaching and Hearing? wherein the spirits of the most spiritual Preacher are soon exhausted; *the tongue of the learned* is ready to cleave to the roof of his mouth; the head is seized with dizziness; the heart with pantings; the organs of speech with weariness; and the knees with trembling; and the ears of the most devout hearers with heaviness; the eyes with sleepiness; and the whole body in a short time with weakness. Shall I instance in the noble duty of Prayer? wherein the pious soul goes out to God, but can scarce get its body

to accompany it ; and there the fancy distracts, the senses divert ; and indeed all the members are ready to play the *Truants*, if not the *Traitors* too : especially the brain, where the soul sits enthroned, is suddenly environed with a rude rout of sluggish vapours arising from the stomach, and being no longer able to defend it self against them, falls down dead in the midst of them : Insomuch that the poor soul is ready to wish sometimes with the sorrowful Prophet, *Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place, that I might leave my members, and go from them, for they are all an assembly of treacherous servants* : or wish that it were like its Saviour, who could leave his raw Disciples asleep, and go and pray apart, and come again unto them. Shall I instance in that high duty of sustaining Martyrdom, bearing persecutions for God ? Come on my body, cries the holy soul, come on to the stake ; come my head, lay down thy self upon this block ; come my body, compose thy self in this
dark

dark dungeon ; come my feet , fit
your selves into these stocks ; come
my hands , draw on these fetters , these
Iron bracelets ; come , come drink the
cup that my Father gives thee . But
oh how it follows to the stake ! what
shaking , shivering , trembling , and
reluctancy may you see in the whole
structure of it ! The head hangs down ,
the eyes run over , the lips quaver ,
the shoulders pull back , the hands
tremble , the knees knock together , and
the whole fabrick is ready to tumble
down , for fear of falling . Either to
this (as some interpret) or to that
duty of Prayer (as others) doth that
of our Saviour refer , *Mark 14. 38.*
*The spirit indeed is willing , but the
flesh is weak .* It seems the spirit of
the weakest Christian is strong , though
the body (as we have seen) of the
strongest Saint is weak : Though in-
deed it is not properly the weakness
that is in the body , that I am to speak
to , but the influence that the body
hath upon the soul to weaken that :
for , whilst the soul sympathizes with
the body , attends to it , spares it , pities
it,

it, it self becomes almost ill affected to the service of God. I am not so much blaming the body, because it had need by reason of its slothfulness to be drawn on to duty; but because by its influences, it draws on the soul also from them: for so we find it by woful experience, that if the body do sleep, the soul cannot wake; it cannot hear without the ear, nor see without the eyes; so that the bodies weariness at length ends in the souls unwillingness; and the weakness of the one, grows to be the sin of the other.

3. Whilst we are in the body, we are at a distance from God, as to *communion* with him: we are estranged from fellowship with him; and this is indeed to be absent from the Lord. Oh how many weary and uncomfortable dayes do poor Saints live at a great distance from their God, their Life, their Happiness, whilst they are in their worldly Pilgrimage, in their Cage of flesh! Oh how many dayes do they forget God, and are apt to think that God hath forgotten them too! How do

do they live sometimes, as it were, without God in the world, their souls being surfeited with carnal pleasures, benumbed with fears, frozen with self-love, choaked with cares, stifled with griefs, and seem to have no more feeling of God their life, than a body in the dust hath of the soul its life ! Oh what a heavy yoke doth the poor soul draw under, when it plows and harrows to the flesh, and cannot lift up its head to Heaven ! Oh how is our intercourse with God obstructed, our beholding of him obscured, our entertaining of him prevented, our enjoyment of him disturbed and violated, our love to him deadened, and his love to us damped ; ours rendered infirm, and his rendered insensible, and all by this make-bate mortal flesh ! Alas what uncertainties, and vicissitudes, what changing and tossings, turnings and windings are our poor pilgrim souls here exercised with ! What breakings and piecing, reconciliations and fallings out, closing and parting, rising and falling, what ups and downs ; what for-
wards

wards and backwards doth the poor distressed soul experience in this animal state ! The flourishing soul withers ; the lofty soul languishes ; the vigorous soul fainteth ; the nimble soul flaggeth ; the devout soul swooneth ; the lively soul sickeneth, and is ready to give up the Ghost ; and she that was a while ago resting and glorying in the arms of her Lord, anon lyes embracing a dunghil, and hath almost forgotten that ever she was happy : Her peace is violated, her rest is disturbed, her converse with Heaven interrupted, her incomes from God are few and insensible, her outgoings to him are few and lazy, and the rivers of her divine pleasures are almost dried up. And all this, whilst she is in this body : and indeed a great part of it by reason of this body in which she is : The animal body keeps us distant from the Lord, that we cannot converse with him, mind him, enjoy him, live upon him, and unto him. The body being fixed only for this animal state, is ever drawing

drawing down the soul, when it would raise up it self in contemplation of, and communion with the blessed God. And so,

1. The *Necessities* of the body do hinder the souls communion with the Lord. Not that the necessities of the body are simply in themselves to be blamed, but the caring for these doth so exercise the soul in this state, that it cannot attend upon God without distraction. Oh how much doth the necessary caring for meat and drink, food and physick; yea, the ordering of temporal affairs, estrange from communion and converse with God! so that the soul, like poor *Martha* is cumbered with many cares, and busied with *much serving* in this house, and cannot attend so devoutly and entirely as it ought upon the Lord. If the body be pinched with pain, the soul cannot be at rest, but must needs look out for relief: If the body be pinched with hunger and thirst, the soul can take no rest, till it have found out a supply for it: If the one be sick, the other is sad; if the one be hungry

gry or thirsty, the other seems to languish; like *Hippocrates* his Twins that laugh and cryed, lived and dyed together.

It is a wonderful mysterie, and a rare secret, how the soul comes to sympathize with the body, and to have not only a knowledge, but, as it were, a feeling of its necessities; how these come to be conveyed to the soul, and how it comes to be thus affected with them. But we find it so: And indeed to speak truth, it seems necessary for the maintaining of this animal state, that it should be so; that the soul should be, as it were, hungry, weary, sick, and sleep too together with the "body: for if our soul should not
"know what it is to be hungry, thirsty,
"cold, or sick, or weary, but by a bare
"ratiocination, or a dry syllogistical
"inference, without any more espe-
"cial feeling of these necessities, it
"would soon suffer the body to lan-
"guish and decay, and commit it
"wholly to all changes and casualties:
"neither would our own body be any
"more to us, than the body of a plant
"or

“or of a starr, which we do many
 “times view with as much clearness,
 “and contemplate with as much con-
 “tentment as we do our own. But
 in the mean time, the soul is divert-
 ed from its main employment, turned
 aside from its communion with God:
 not so much by providing somewhat
 for our bodies to eat, and drink, and
 put on, which is lawful and needfull,
 as our Saviour implies, *Mat. 6. 32.*
 as by sinking it self into the body,
 being passionately and inordinately
 affected with its wants, and for be-
 ing sinfully thoughtful, as our Savi-
 our intimateth in the same chapter,
vers. 31.

2. The *Passions* of the body do hin-
 der the souls communion with the
 Lord. So powerful is the interest and
 influence that this body hath in and
 over the soul, that it fills it with de-
 sires, pleasures, griefs, joys, fears, an-
 gers, and sundry passions. The body
 calls out the soul to attend upon its se-
 veral passions, which I dare not say are
 sinful in themselves, as the first affect
 our souls, no more than it is our sin
 that

that we are men : our blessed Saviour seems not to have been free from them, as grief, *Isa.* 53. 3. fear, *Heb.* 5. 7. who yet was free from all sin, *1 Pet.* 2. 22. Nay, it seems necessary (as I said before) considering the nature of this animal life, that the soul should have the corporeal passions and impressions feelingly and powerfully conveyed to it, without which it could not express a due benevolence to the body that belongs to it : and indeed, were it not so, we could not properly be said (in the Apostles phrase here) to be at home in the body : the soul would rather dwell *in domo alienâ quàm suâ*. But the soul being called out to attend upon these passions, is easily ensnared by them : for it can hardly exercise it self about them, but it slips insensibly into a sinful inordinacy. As for example : “ The
 “ animal spirits nimbly playing in the
 “ brain, and swiftly flying from thence
 “ thorow the nerves up and down
 “ the whole body, do raise the fancy
 “ with mirth and chearfulness which
 “ we must not presently mistake for
 “ the

“ the power of grace, nor condemn
 “ for the working of corruption : So
 “ also when the Gall empties its bitter
 “ juice into the Liver, and that mingles
 “ it self with the blood there, it begets
 “ fiery spirits, which presently flye up
 “ into the brain, and cause impressions
 “ of anger. Now though I dare not
 say, that the souls first sensating and
 entertaining of these passions is sin-
 ful, yet it is sadly evident that our
 souls being once moved by these un-
 disciplin’d animal spirits, are very apt
 to sit upon, and cherish those passions
 of grief, fear, mirth, anger, and, as it
 were, to work them into it self, in an
 inordinate manner, and contrary to
 the dictates of reason, and so the will
 presently makes those sinful, which
 before were but meerly humane, or
 as one calls them, *ζωαὶ σαρκέων*, the
 meer blossomings or shootings forth of
 animal life within us. We see then in
 these particulars, that not only the de-
 praved dispositions of the soul do keep
 us at a distance from God, but even
 this body also is a great hinderance to
 that knowledge of God which we
 shall

shall attain to, that service of God which we might perform, and that sweet communion with him, which we shall enjoy. It is a clog to the soul that would run; a mist to the soul that would see clearly; a manacle to the soul that would work; a snare to the soul that would be free; a fetter to chain it to earthly and material things, and, as it were, a pinion to the wings of contemplation: More particularly, it is a hinderance to it, as to those three things which I have named: As to the souls knowledge of God, the body is an occasion of ignorance and error: As to its serving of God, an occasion of distraction and weariness; lightness and triflingness; and as to its communion with God, an occasion of earthliness and sensuality. Now this distance which this body keeps the soul at from God, might more particularly appear in another way of explication, by observing the especial grievances that do arise to the soul from those three great animal faculties (if I may so speak.) The Senses, the Appetite, the Fancy.

H

I. The

I. The *Senses*, I mean the external senses of the body; seeing, hearing, &c. These convey passions to the soul, upon which it insists and feeds with a sinful fondness and eagerness. Set open the eye, and it will set hard to convey some species to the soul of earthly objects, that shall jostle the Ideas of God out of it. Set open the ear, and it will fill the soul with such a noise, and earthly tumult, that the secret whispers of the divine spirit cannot be heard. The like I may say of the rest: Oh how easily do these discompose the fixed soul, distract the devout soul, cast a mist before the contemplative soul, and hale down the raised soul from communion with Heaven to converse with earthly objects! *Ut vidi ut perii!* is the complaint of many a Christian, as well as it was of the Heathen. The souls of most men are quite sunk into their senses, and do nothing, but, as it were, lacky to them all their lives, and so the servants are on horse-back, and Princes go on foot. Though the eye will never be satisfied with seeing, nor the ear

ear with hearing; yet forsooth, these importunate suiters must be gratified: the eye must see what it will see, and the ear must hear what it will hear: nothing must be with-held from them, that these childish senses do whine after. These mens souls are indeed incarnate, swallowed up in their eyes, ears and mouths. But not only these, but even godly souls are often charmed and ensnared by their senses; even they converse not only *in* the body, but too much *with* it also; and it becomes as a *Dalilah*, to lull them asleep, and bind them too. Good *Job* found his senses so treacherous, that he was fain to make a covenant with them, *Job* 31. 1. And well if he could scape so too. The words are a Metaphor; for indeed the worst of it is, that these senses are not capable of any discipline; one cannot bring them into any covenant-terms: so that whilst we have senses, they will be treacherous; whilst our eyes are in our heads, they will be wandering after forbidden objects.

2. The Appetite, the sensitive appetite, which is a faculty of the

sensitive soul, whereby this animal man is stirred up to desire and lust after the things which his senses have dictated to him. This bodily lust following upon the neck of the former, becomes a greater snare to the soul: This restless suitor comes whining ever and anon to the soul for every trifle that the eye hath seen, or the ear heard, or the mouth hath tasted; and by its continual coming, and importunate crying, wearies her into an observance of it: As the fond child comes crying to the Mother for every knack and gaw that it hath seen upon the stalls, and she, though she cannot in judgement approve of the request; yet either in fond indulgence, or for peace sake, will condescend to purchase it. This is the Daughter of the Horsleech, that cries continually, *Give, Give*: Why, what would it have? even any thing that it hath seen, or heard, or touched, or tasted; any thing that it sees a fellow-creature to be posselt of: And so indeed the Appetite doth not only ensnare the soul unto drunkenness and gluttony, but voluptuousness, lasciviousness,

lasciviousness, and all manner of sensuality. The evil of the sensual appetite appears in wantonness and lasciviousness (whether real, verbal, or mental) in immoderate and inordinate trading, ingrossing, sporting, building, attiring, sleeping, visiting, as well as in eating and drinking. I will determine nothing concerning the first motions of the appetite, whereby it sollicit the will to fulfill it; only this, that if it sollicit to any thing simply and morally evil, it is sinfull in that first act; and that at all times it ought carefully to be watcht, lest it seduce to intemperance in things lawfull. But concerning the gratifying of the appetite, seeing there must be in us a sensitive appetite, whilst we are in this animal state, it is to be endeavoured, as far as may be, that we gratifie the appetite, not as it is a sensitive appetite, but under this notion, as the thing that it desires makes for our real good, and tends to the enjoyment of the supreme good: to eat & drink, not because we are hungry or thirsty, because the appetite desires it; but with reference to the main end,

with respect to the highest good, that the body may be enabled, strengthened and quickend to wait upon the soul chearfully in the actions of a holy life. But this man, in his animal state cannot perfectly attain to, which shews that the appetite doth keep us at a distance from God.

3. The *Fancy*; this also keeps a man at a distance from God, and hinders us in the knowledge and service of God, and interrupts the souls communion with God. This is a busie and petulant faculty, or inward sense, and the soul doth readily sensate the passions of it, so that it doth frequently hinder its mental operations, and becomes a great snare. A working fancy (how much soever it is magnified by the wisdom of this world) is a mighty snare to the soul, except it work in a fellowship with right reason, and a sanctified heart: I am perswaded there is no greater burden in the world to a serious soul; especially in hot and dry constitutions, where it is commonly most pregnant, and most impatient of discipline. And, I confess, I have often wondred

wondred at the souls readiness to be so speedily affected with the fantasms and imaginations of it, and fondness to hug them so dearly. This indeed, if it be so far refined, as to present sober and solid imaginations to the mind, and to act in subservience to sanctified reason, is an excellent handmaid to the soul in many of her functions: But otherwise is a snare, as we have partly observed already, and may observe more, if we study the secrets of our own souls, and the mighty mysteries that are within us. And this doth not only ordinarily disturb, distract and hinder in ordinary duties, but even when the soul is at the highest pitch of communion and contemplation, it assaies to pull it down to attend to its vain fantasms; and indeed gives it many a grievous fall. I doubt not to affirm, that this is the most pernicious enemy of the three that I named to the souls happiness, as might appear in many respects; I will only name one: It hath an advantage against us, which neither of the other two hath: It infests us, and annoys

us sleeping as well as waking. In sleep, the senses are lockt up, and the appetite is, for the most part, silent from its begging; but then the fancy is as busie and tumultuous as ever, forming and gathering imaginations, and those are commonly wild and senseless, if not worse. The mind, in way of kindness and benevolence to the body, suspends its own actings, whilst the body takes its rest in the night, and then the rude fancy takes its opportunity to wander at liberty, as being without its keeper, and acts to the disturbance of the body; but that's not the worst, for it becomes so tumultuous and impetuous sometimes, as that it awakens the mind to attend upon its imaginations; and this the soul doth condescend to in an inordinate manner, and sets the stamp of sinfulness upon them, to its own wounding. And now that I am speaking of sleep as a *Mantissa* to this discourse, I cannot but observe how this very thing also keeps us at a distance from God, in this animal state. How is our communion with God interrupted by this! For
herein

herein we cease, not only from the actions of an animal life, but commonly from the actions of a spiritual life too. What a great breach, what a sad intercision is there made in our converse with God by this means! Such a poor happiness it is, that we have in this world, that it is cut off, and seems, as it were, not to be one fourth part of our time: For indeed a happiness that is not felt, deserves not the name of happiness. Some learned and active men have been ashamed that they have slept away so much of their time, which was all too little for their studies and exploits: Ah poor Christian, that, as it were, sleeps away so much of his God, being as much estranged from him in the night, as though he had never conversed with him in the day, and in the morning when he awakes, cannot alwaies find himself with him neither; which is enough to make a poor Saint wish, either that he might have no need of sleep, or that with the amorous Spouse, *Cant. 5. 2.* Though he sleep, his heart might wake perpetually.

We have seen in what sense this mortal body keeps Beleevers absent from the Lord, and in what respects it keeps them at a distance from God, even in this life, from the *Knowledge* of God, the *Service* of God, and *Communion* with him. Here then by way of Application ;

1. We may see that it was for good reason that the blessed Apostle is confident, and willing to depart ; nay, he groans within himself, desiring that *mortality might be swallowed up of life*, as he speaks, *vers. 4*. I told you before, that these words did contain the reason or ground thereof ; and by this time I hope you see that the reason is good, and the ground is sufficient : What will the men of this world say ? Will you perswade us out of our life ? Should any thing in the world make a man weary of his life ? *Præstat miserum esse quam non esse* : The Apostle was sure besides himself, or he would never have fallen out with his own life : or else he was in a passion, and knew not what he said : or else his life was bitter to him, by reason of the poor, afflicted, persecuted

persecuted condition that he lived in, and so he was become desperate, and cared not what became of him. No, none of these: The Apostle was in his right wits, and in a sober mind too. It was not a passion, or a fit of melancholly, but his judgement and choice upon good deliberation; and therefore you find him in the same mind elsewhere, *Phil. 1. 23. I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* Besides, he gives a reason for what he desires; now we know that passion is unruly and unreasonable. Neither was the Apostle besides himself; for he gives a good, solid and wise reason,—— *Whilst we are at home in the body, &c.* He will part with his life, rather than not be perfectly happy. For, whereas worldlings put such a high price upon life, and think that nothing should perswade men out of their lives: Its true indeed, if we speak properly, life is the perfection of the creature: The happiness of every thing is its life: *A living Dog is better than a dead Lion, Ecclet. 9. 4.* But I may say to these, even as our Saviour said

said to that woman, in *Joh. 4. 18.* concerning her Husband; The life that we live here, is not our life. The union of the sensitive soul with the body, is indeed truly and properly the life of a beast, and its greatest happiness; for it is capable of no higher perfection: But the union of the rational soul with God, is the noblest perfection of man, and his highest life: so that the life of a believing soul is not destroyed at death, but perfected. Neither was the Apostle weary of his life, because of the adversities of it. The Apostle was of a braver spirit sure than any Stoick; he durst live, though he rather desired to dye. All the conflicts he endured with the world, never wrung such a sigh from him, as the conflict that he had with his own corruptions did, *Rom. 7. 24.* *O wretched man, &c.* All the persecutions in the world never made him groan so much, as the burden of his flesh doth here, and his great distance from the Lord. A godly soul can converse with persecuting men, and a tempting Devil, can handle briars and thorns,

thorns, can grapple with any kind of oppressions and adversities in the flesh without despondency, so long as it finds it self in the bosome of God, and in the arms of Omnipotence. But when it begins to consider where it is, how far it is from its God, its life, and the happy state that God hath prepared it for, then it cannot but groan within it self, and be ready with *Peter*, to cast it self out of the ship, to get to its God; to land it self in eternity. Neither indeed (to speak truly) is it only the sense of sin against God, which sets the godly soul a going: For, though it must be confest, that this is a heavy burden upon the soul, yet the Apostle makes no complaint of this here, but only of his distance from God, that necessary distance from God that the body kept him at.

2. See here the excellent spirit of true Religion. Godly souls do groan after an unbodyed estate, not only because of their sins in the body, but even because of the necessary distance at which the body keeps them from God. We may suppose a godly
soul

soul at some time to have no manner of affliction in the world to grieve him, no sin unpardoned, unrepented of to trouble him; yet for all this he is not at perfect rest; he is burdened and groans within himself, because he is at such a distance from that absolute good, whom he longs to know more familiarly, and enjoy more fully than he doth yet, or than is allowed to mortal men: And though nothing else ayl him, yet the consideration of this distance makes him cry out, *Oh when shall I come and appear before God!* he wholly swallowed up in him, see him as he is, and converse with him face to face. Bare innocency, or freedom from sin, cannot satisfie that noble and large spirit that is in a truly and Godlike soul; but that spirit of true goodness (being nothing else but an efflux from God himself) carries the soul out after a more intimate union with that Being from whence it came: God dwelling in the soul, doth by a secret mighty power draw the soul more and more to himself. In a word, a godly soul that is really toucht with

with the sense of divine sweetness and fulness, and imprest with divine goodness and holiness, as the wax is with the stamp of the seal, could not be content to dwell for ever in this kind of animal body, nor take up an eternal rest in this imperfect mixed state, though it could converse with the world without a sinfull sullyng of it self; but must needs endeavour still a closer conjunction with God; and leaving the chase of all other objects, pant and breath not only after God alone, but after more and more of him; and not only when it is under the sense of sin, but most of all when it is under the most powerful influences of divine grace and love, cry out with *Paul*, *Oh, who will deliver me out of this body?*

3. Suffer me from hence to expostulate a little, to expostulate with Christian souls about their unseemly temper. Doth this animal life, and mortal body, keep us at such a distance from our God, our happiness? Why are we then so fond of this life and mixed state? Why do we so pamper
this

this body? Why so anxiously studious to keep it up, so dreadfully afraid of the ruines of it? If we take the Apostles words in the first sense that I named, then I may ask with him in the first verse; *Know we not, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we had a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens?* or *vers. 8.* Why are we not willing rather to be *absent from the body*, and to be *present with the Lord*? If we take them in the latter sense, as this animal body is an hinderance to the souls knowledge of, and communion with God, then I ask concerning this, as the Apostle doth concerning rich men, *James 2. 6.* Why do ye pamper, prize, honour, dote upon this body? Doth not this body oppress you, distract you, burden you, clog you, hinder you? Doth not this body interpose between the *Sun of Righteousness*, between the *Father of Lights*, and your souls that should shine with a light and glory borrowed from him; even as the dark body of the earth interposes between the Sun and Moon,

Moon, to eclipse its light? Why are we not rather weary, that we are in the body? Surely there are some objections, some impediments to the souls longing after its happy state, which I shall come to anon: But I doubt also, that there is something that chains the soul to this animal life; some cords in this earthly tabernacle, that tye up the soul in it: but I cannot well imagine what they should be. Say not, There is something of God to be enjoyed in this life, which makes it pleasant: For, although this be true, yet I am sure, God gives nothing of himself to a soul, thereby to clog it or cloy it. Did *Moses* send for some Clusters of the Land of *Canaan* into the wilderness, think ye, that the people might see and taste the fruits, and sit still, and be satisfied, and say, Oh it is enough; we see that there are pleasant things in that Land, we will never come at it? or, did he not do it rather that they might make the more haste to possess themselves of it? Will any man say, Away, I will have no more land, no more money, I have some already?

already ? Can a godly soul say, God hath given me an earnest, I desire no more ? No, no, but the report that a Christian hears of a rest remaining, a happy life remaining for it, and the chariots of divine graces that he sees God hath sent out into his soul to convey it thither, make him cry out, not with *Jacob, Gen 45. 28. It is enough, Joseph my Son is yet alive, I will go and see him before I dye* : But oh this is not enough, this report is not enough ; it is not enough that I taste some of the good things of the Land ; it is not enough that I see these carriages sent out for me ; it is not enough that my soul hath an happy and honourable life prepared for it ; I see it indeed before I dye, but I will also dye, that I may see it better, and enjoy it more. But I doubt there is some earthly tye, even upon the heavenly soul that chains it to this present animal body : But, sure I am, that whatsoever it is, it is but a weak one. Is there any worldly accommodation, any creature-toy, that should in reason step between a soul and its God ?

God? Is this life sweet, because there are creature-comforts to be enjoyed? And will it not be a better life, when creature-comforts shall not be needed? And are the pleasures of this body, the comforts of this life, the flattering smiles, or fawning embraces of the creature, such a mighty contentment to a soul, to a soul acquainted with the highest good? Hast thou, O my soul, any such full and satisfying entertainment in thy Pilgrimage, as to make thee loath to go home? Wilt thou hide thy self with *Saul* among the *stuff*, among the lumber of the world, when thou art sought for to be crowned? Are the empty sounds of popular applause, the breaking bubbles of secular greatness, the shallow streams of sensual pleasures, the smiling dalliance, and lispings eloquence of wives and children, the flying shadows of creature-refreshments, the momentary flourishes of worldly beauty and bravery, Are these meat for a soul? Are these the proper object, or the main happiness of such a divine thing, as an immortal soul? Why are we
not

not rather weary of this body, that makes us so weary of heavenly employment? Why do we not rather long to part with that life, that parts us from our life? And instead of the young Apostles, *It is good to be here*, cry out with the sweet singer, *Oh that one would give me the wings of a Dove, that I may fly away and be at rest!*

And now methinks, by this time, I might be somewhat bold, and form my remaining discourse into an Exhortation. But, it may be, you will not bear it all at once; therefore I will first begin with a Dehortation, to dissuade from two evils concerning your body, *viz. Fear and Fondness.*

1. Take heed of *Fear* for the body. I speak not so much of those first impressions which our fancies and animal spirits do make upon our minds (though it were to be wished, that the mind did not so much as once sensite or entertain these) but of those acts of the will, whereby it doth receive, allow, cherish these impressions, until the Cockatrice egge be hatcht into

into a Viper. I speak not against *care* and circumspection; no nor against that kind of suspicion, whereby wise and prudent persons are jealous of circumstances and events, and so do watch to prevent, remove, or manage bodily evils, which is called Fear: though even in these there may be an extreme, a *fear where no fear is*, Psal. 53. 5. which is there ascribed to the wicked, and elsewhere threatened as a judgement, Lev. 26. 36. *The sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them*, Deut. 28. 65. *The Lord shall give thee a-trembling heart*: There is a prudent man who foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, Prov. 22. 3. But there are also many fools that hide themselves, though they see no evil. But I am not speaking of these: There is a vast difference between *Care* and *Fear*. By *Fear*, I mean that trembling, fluctuating, tormenting passion; that doth not suffer the heart to be at rest, but doth, as it were, unhinge it, and loosen the joynts of the soul, whether it break out into expressions or no: It
clouds

clouds the understanding, unsettles the will, disordereth the affections, confounds the memory, and is like an Earthquake in the soul, taking it off from its own basis, destroying the consistency of it, and hurling all the faculties into confusion : This, whether it break out into any unseemly acts or no (which commonly it doth) is it self an unseemly temper for a wise man, much more for a godly. I might speak as a Philosopher, and shew how unbecoming a man, and how destructive to him this passion is ; so much, that whilst it doth predominate, it almost robs him of that which is his greatest glory, even reason it self. But, to say no worse of it, it is very opposite, if not contrary to that noble grace of Faith, whereby the steady soul resteth and lodgeth in the arms of God, as in its center. But to speak to the thing in hand, what an unseemly passion is this? we would have the world to believe that we have layd up our happiness in God, and that we are troubled that we are so far from him ; and yet we are afraid lest that should
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be taken out of the way that keeps us at a distance from him : We flatter our selves that we are in haste for Heaven, and yet we are dreadfully afraid lest our rubs should be taken out of the way. How do these things hang together? Are we perswaded, that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were taken down, we have a building not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens? If not, Why do we yet call our selves Christians? But I think I may take it for granted, we are all so perswaded : And if so, Why are we so afraid it should be taken down? I am loath to speak what I think ; yet methinks the entire and ardent love which we either do bear, or ought to bear to the Blessed God, and union and communion with him, should cast out this fear : This is suitable to Scripture, 1 *Job.* 4. 18. I will not dispute how far sinful fear for the body may carry a godly soul ; the further, the worse I am sure : But if any will needs be so indulgent to his own passions, and so much an enemy to his own peace, as to encourage himself
to

to fear (which is a strange thing) from the example of *Abraham*, denying his wife; or *Peter*, denying his Lord; let him compare the issue, and then let me see whether he dare go and do likewise: But if that will not fright you from fear, chew upon these two Considerations.

1. I pray you seriously dispute the matter with your selves, how far fear of sickness and death may consist with that ardent thirst after union and perfect communion with the Blessed God, with which we ought to be posselt.

2. Dispute seriously how far it can stand with the sincerity of a Christian. God hath not left us in the dark, as to this matter. I will turn you to a Text or two, which, methinks, should strike cold to all slavish trembling Professors, *Prov. 28. 1. Job 15. 20, 21. The wicked travellet with pain all his dayes, a dreadfull sound is in his ears:* They are the words of *Eliphaz* indeed, but they do agree with the words of God himself, *Isa. 33. 14. The sinners in Sion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized the hypocrites:* When I read over these Texts
I cannot

I cannot but pray, and cry, O my soul; come not you into the number of the wicked, and be not united into the assembly of Hypocrites!

2. Take heed of *fondness* of the body: of a double act of it, *priding, pampering*.

1. Take heed you *pride* not your selves in any excellencies of the body. Doth this mortal body keep us at a distance from our God? Do we well then to love that which keeps us from that which is most lovely? Why do we stand fondly gazing upon that which keeps us from the blessed sight of God? If you ask me, Did ever any man hate his own flesh? I will ask you again, Did ever any wise man love his own flesh above him that made it? Did ever any godly soul love his body in opposition to his God? Oh, but it is a comely body! And what is a beautiful body, but a fair prison? A silver twist, or a clog of gold, do as really hinder the flight of a Bird, and forestall her liberty, as a stone tyed at her heels. Nay, those very excellencies which you so much admire, are so much the greater hinderances. If we had learned that

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excellent lesson indeed, of enjoying all things only in God, then the several beauties and braveries of the body, would be a help to our devotion, they would carry us up to an admiration and contemplation of that glorious and most excellent Being, from whom they were communicated: so we might (in some sense) look into a glass, and behold the beauty of God. But (alas!) these commonly prove the greater snares: Many had been more beautifull within, had they been less beautifull without; more chaste, if less comly; many had been more peaceable, and more at peace too, if they had been less able to have quarrelled and fought. It was said of *Galba*, who was an ingenuous man, but deformed, that his soul dwelt ill: but, sure I am, it might better have been so said of beautifull *Abso- lom*, or *Jezabel*, whose bodies became a snare to their souls. On the other hand, they that want a beauty in their bodies, will perhaps labour to find an excellency in their minds far beyond it; as the Philosopher advised

to look often into a glass, *ut si deformis sis, corrigas formositatem morum, &c.*

2. Take heed of pampering the body, of treating it too gently and delicately. Deny it nothing that may fit it for the service of God and your souls, and allow it no more than may do that. Thy pampering is 1. *Unseemly*: What, make a darling of that which keeps us from our Lord! carry it gently, and delicately, and tenderly towards that, which whilst we carry about with us we cannot be happy!

2. *Injurious*: If you bring up this *servant* delicately from a child, you shall have him become your *Son* at length, yea, your Master. If you do by your bodies, as the fond King did by his Son *Adonijah*, 1 *King*, 1. 6. never displease it, never reprove it, never deny it; it will do with you in time as he did, raise seditions in your soul. Go on and please, and pamper, and cocker your bodies, and it will come to this at length, that you must deny them nothing; you must give whatsoever a whining appetite will crave, go whither your gadding senses will carry you,

and *ſpeak* whatſoever wanton fancy will ſuggeſt. Doth not the body it ſelf ſet us at a ſufficient diſtance from God; but we muſt eſtrange our ſelves more from him by pleaſuring it, ſpend the time that ſhould be for God, in decking, trimming, adorning it? When you cram this, you feed a Bird that will pick out your eyes; you nourish a Traitor, when you gratifie this *Adonijah*. In a word, Is it not enough that we do all carry fire in our boſoms, but we muſt alſo blow it up into a flame? *Nay, my Brethren, do not ſo fooliſhly.*

And now, methinks, by this time, I may venture upon an Exhortation; by degrees at leaſt.

1. *Watch againſt the Body.* You have heard how the ſenſes, appetite and fancy become a ſnare to the ſouls living unto, and converſing with God: Now then, if you ſeriously deſign communion with Heaven, if you placed your happineſs in the knowledge and enjoyment of that ſupreme and eternal good, it becomes you to watch againſt all things that may diſtract or diverſe

divert you from it, or make you fall short of the glory of God. Men that live upon earthly designs, whose great ambition it is to be great in the world, do not only use the most effectual means, and take the most direct courses to accomplish those designs, and attain those ends, but do continually suspect, and diligently watch against all the moths that would corrupt, the rust that would consume, the thieves that would plunder their treasures; and, in a word, against all possible hindrances, defraudations, and disappointments: So will we suspect and watch sure against all enemies and traitors to our souls, if we live here upon eternal designs, if our ambition be to be great in God alone. And the more eminent the danger is, the more will we watch. Have you not found by experience, which of these three have been most prejudicial to your communion with God? If not, you have not been so studious to know the state, nor pursue the happiness of your own souls as you might: If so, then watch against that most of all, which you have found to

be most injurious. For it ordinarily comes to pass, either by the difference of constitutions, or difference of temptations, or different wayes of living, or some other thing, that Gods children are more ensnared by some one of these than other. Well, be sure to watch and pray, and strive more especially against the more especial enemies of your souls.

2. *Live above the body*: above bodily enjoyments, ornaments, excellencies. Though these bodily enjoyments be never so sweet, these bodily ornaments never so glorious, yet is not your happiness in these. Certainly they live to their loss, who live upon the excellencies of their own souls, whether natural or supernatural; they deprive themselves of the infinite glory, fullness and sufficiency that is in the Blessed God, who take up their happiness in these: Much more do they pinch and impoverish their own souls, who live upon bodily ornaments, or excellencies; wherein many inferiour creatures do excell them; the Rose in beauty, the Sun in brightness, the Lion in strength,

strength, the Stag in swiftness, &c. If a woman were as lovely as the morning, *fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun*: if a man were full of personal grace and majesty, *terrible as an Army with banners*; yet were not their happiness in these accomplishments. Nay, which is worse, these ornaments stand between us and our happiness. When you begin therefore at any time fondly to admire any of these bodily excellencies, then think with your selves, Oh but all these do not make my soul happy: Nay, this beautifull outside must stink, and be deformed; these fair and flourishing members must wither in the dust; this active, strong and graceful body, must be buried in disgrace and weakness, before I can attain to entire and perfect happiness. This consideration will advance us to live above the body.

3. *Be content to be unbodied for a time.* Is it true, that we can no otherwise be happy, no otherwise be present with God, know him familiarly, enjoy him perfectly and entirely? cannot we get to him, except

we go thorow the dust? Be it so then; be content to be unbodied for a time. *Occidat modo imperet*, could the Heathen say concerning her Son; much rather may a Christian say concerning his Father, Let him slay me, so my soul may but reign with him, which is by his reigning in it; Let him kill me, so he will but fill me; Let him draw me thorow the dust of the earth, so he will but draw me out of this dust of the world, so he will but draw me nigh unto himself, and bring me into a full and inseparable conjunction with my Lord! Methinks I need not use many arguments to perswade a soul that is feelingly overpowered, mastered, ravished with the infinite beauty, goodness, glory and fulness of his God, to be willing to quit a dusty tabernacle for a time, wherein it is almost swallowed up, to depart, and to be entirely swallowed up in him. Nay, suppose a Christian in the lowest form, who hath but chosen God for his highest good and only happiness (as every sincere Christian hath) methinks he should have learnt this lesson, to
comply

comply with that infinite, perfect will, that governs both him and the whole world: I cannot conceive a godly soul without the subduing of self-will; nor suppose a sincere Saint void at least of the habit of self-resignation. Therefore I will add no more concerning this, but rise a step higher.

4. *Long after an unbodied state*, desire to depart, and to be with the Lord, groan within your selves to have mortality swallowed up of life; in which temper you find the holy Apostle. To be content to dye, is a good temper, a temper scarce to be found (I think) in any wicked man; not from a right principle, I am sure: But, methinks, its no very great thing in comparison of what we should labour to attain to. Think on't a little; what a strange kind of cold uncouth phrase it is, Such a man is content to be happy! Men are not said to be content to be rich, but covetous; not willing to be honoured, but ambitious: And why should it only be content to be with God? I am perswaded there is no shew nor sem-

blance of satisfactory bliss and happiness for a soul, a noble immortal nature, but only in the supreme essential, perfect, absolute good, the blessed and eternal good: And, should not this noble active Being be carried out with vehement longings after its proper and full happiness, as well as this earthly sluggish body is carried with restless appetite after health, and safety, and liberty? Why should a soul alone be content to be happy, when all other things in the world, do so ardently court, and vehemently pursue their respective ends, and several perfections? Certainly if the blessed and glorious God should display himself in all his beauty, and open all his infinite treasures of goodness, and sweetness, and fulness within the view of a soul, it could not but be ravished with the object, earnestly press into his presence, *rue in amplexus*, and with a holy impatience throw it self into his arms: There would be need of setting bounds to the Mount, to keep it from breaking thorow unto the Lord: what is said of the Queen of the South, when she

she had heard the wisdom, and seen the glory of Solomon, 2 Chron. 9. 4. would be more true of a Christian, there would be *no more spirit left* in him. Some have therefore observed the wisdom of God in engaging the soul in so dear a union with the body, that it might care for it, and not quit it: Yea, the Heathen observed the wisdom of God in concealing the happy state of a separated soul, that so men might be content to live out their time, *victu-rosque Dii celant, ut vivere duntaxat, Felix esse mori.* But alas, we see but darkly as thorow a glasse, and our affections towards God are proportionable to our apprehensions of him; these are dark, and therefore those are dull. And oh would to God they were but indeed proportionable in for then we should love him only, if not earnestly; and desire him entirely, if not sufficiently. Consider what I have hinted, concerning the happiness of the soul in the enjoyment of God, and what I have more fully demonstrated concerning the bodies hindering of it, and keeping it at a distance; and then
argue,

argue, Is happiness the main end of every Being? Must not this soul then, being a noble and immortal nature, needs look out for some high and noble happiness, suitable to its excellent self? Can that be any where, but in the enjoyment of the highest and uncreated good? And can this never be attained whilst we are in this animal state, in this mortal body, that keeps at such a distance? Oh why then do we not look out after so much enjoyment of this blessed God, as we are now capable of, and long after a departure hence, that we may enjoy him freely and fully, and be eternally happy in him! oh be not only content, but even covetous.

But what, shall the soul break the cage that she may take her flight? God forbid! How can he pretend to be a lover of God, who is not formed into his will, subject to his ordination, content to abide in the station that he hath allotted him? But if we may not break it to escape, yet methinks it may be safe enough, with submission to wish it were broken: If we may not
with

with *Saul*, dissolve our selves, yet with *Paul*, we may desire to be dissolved. The perfection that the most Christians attain to, is but to *desire to live*, and be content to dye : Oh, consider what I have said in this matter, and invert the order of those words in your hearts, *Be content to live, desire to dye.*

But what, would you have us pray for death? Answer : I speak not of a formal praying either for one or other. What the Apostle speaks of the greatest of sins, *1 Joh. 5. 16.* I am ready to say of this state of freedom from all sin, *I do not say that ye should pray for it.* You will tell me that *David* and *Hezekiah* prayed for life : And I could tell you that *Elijah* prayed for death, *1 King. 19. 4.* he was indeed a man subject to passions, *James 5. 17.* but I believe this was none of them. But I will not enveigle my self in any controverſie : Methinks the sad consideration laid before your eyes, whilest we are in the body, we are absent, distant from the Lord, should wring out an *O wretched man that I am, &c.* or an *I desire to be dissolved*; or if not words, yet at least

least a groan after immortality, with our Apostle here — *We groan within our selves, that mortality may be swallowed up of life.*

But can a soul possibly long for the destruction of the body? Philosophy indeed tells us that it cannot. Be it so: yet I'm sure Divinity teaches, that a soul may long after the redemption of the body; the redemption of it from this kind of animal, corruptible ensnaring condition that it is now in, *Rom. 8. 23.* — *We groan within our selves, waiting for the redemption of our body.* If we cannot wish to be unclothed, yet we may long to be clothed upon; *vers. 4.* of this chapter: At least, methinks, the Heathen should not out-do us, who could say, *Mori nolo, sed me mortuum esse nihil curo.*

But, will all cry, Oh if we were sure of interest in Christ, of pardon of sin, of truth, of grace, of eternal life, then we could freely leave all. *Answ.*

1. That is, you would live to be more holy before you dye: you are not yet holy enough. No, nor never shall be till you dye. If you long after holiness, long

to be with God then ; for that is a state of perfect holiness. To desire to live, upon pretence of being more holy, is a meer fallacy, a contradiction. But, it may be, this is not the meaning of the Objection : Therefore,

2. A not having of what we would have, is not an excuse for not doing what we should do. It is our duty to rejoyce in the Lord, *Phil. 4. 4.* which our not having of assurance, doth not exempt us from ; though, if we have assurance, we might indeed rejoyce the more. But to take off this plea at once.

3. Our earnest longings after a full and perfect enjoyment of God, and so our breathings after an immortal state doth not depend upon our assurance ; but indeed assurance rather depends upon that. I doubt we are commonly mistaken in the nature of assurance ; and, it may be, are in a wrong manner curious about the *signs* of Christs appearing in our souls. For, certainly a well grounded assurance of the love of God, doth most discover and unfold it self in the growth of
true

true godliness in the soul; Now the love of God, and an earnest desire to be like unto him, and to be with him, is the better half of all religion, *Mar. 22: 37, 38.* so that it rather seems that assurance springs up from this frame of soul, than that this arises out of assurance. If assurance be the thing that you desire, get your souls joyned to God in a union of affections, will, and ends, and then labour and long to be closer to him, liker to him, perfectly holy and happy in him, and be ye assured that Christ is in you of a truth: For these mighty works which he hath wrought, these divine breathings, these holy pantings after him do bear witness of him.

4. Whether ever you come to that feeling knowledge, that powerful sense of your state or no, which you call assurance, yet know, that it is your duty to long after immortality. We are wont to call assurance the priviledge of some few, but the Scripture make this temper that I am speaking of, the duty of all Believers, which I do the rather name, because I find few Professors of this temper;

per; and indeed but few that are willing to believe that they ought to be. Our Saviour calls all Believers to as much in effect as I do, *Luk. 21. 28. Look up and lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh* : whereby is not meant a bare posture and speculation, but joy and longing are required by that phrase, say the Dutch Annotat. See also *Rev. 22. 17. Consider further* (which, methinks should strike cold to the hearts of cold-hearted Professors) that this very temper is made one of the greatest characters of true and sincere Saints : I do not know of any one oftner named ; See *Rom. 8. 23. We groan within our selves, waiting for the redemption of our body,* *2 Tim. 4. 8. The Lord shall give the Crown to them that love his appearing,* *Tit. 2. 13. We should live godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ,* *2 Pet. 3. 12. What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hastening to the coming of*
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the day of God ! Jude 21. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Do all these plain and pathetical Scriptures stand for cyphers in your eye ? Methinks they should not. But not to stand upon the proof of it to be a duty, it matters not whether there be an expresse command for it or no : This that I am speaking of, is not so much the duty of godly persons, as the very nature, genius and spirit indeed of godliness it self. Methinks a godly soul, that is truly toucht with divine goodnes, influenc^t by it, and imprest with it, as the Needle is with the Loadstone, must needs strive powerfully within it self to be in conjunction with it : A holy soul, that after all its wearisome defeats, and shameful disappointments in the creature, finds its self perfectly matcht with this infinite, full, and perfect object, must certainly and necessarily be carryed, without any other argument, with fervent longings after union to it, and communion with it. The Spouse might say concerning Christ,

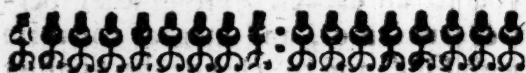
Christ, as he concerning her, *Cant.* 6. 12. *Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Aminadab.* And every godly soul may in some degree say with that Spouse, *Cant.* 5. 4. 5. *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him: I rose up, &c.* Tell me, friends, How can Divine Grace, that Well of living water in the soul, chuse but spring up into eternal life? *John* 4. 14. I doubt not to affirm, that that which is of God in the soul, must needs carry the soul after God; as it belongs to Heaven, so it will be longing towards Heaven. That which is of a divine original, must needs have a divine tendency; that which is of divine extraction, will have in it a divine attraction, and pursue a divine perfection, *Col.* 3. 1. That divine life and spirit that runs thorow godly souls, doth awaken and exalt in some measure all the powers of them into an active and chearful sympathy with that absolute good that renders them compleatly blessed. Holiness and purity of heart will be attracting God more and more

to it self; and the more pure our souls are, and the more separate from earthly things, the more earnestly will they endeavour the nearest union that may be with God: and so by consequence, methinks they must needs in some sense desire the removal of that animal life, and dark body that stands in their way: for they know that that which now letteth, will let (such is the unchangeable nature of it, till it be laid in the dust) till it be taken out of the way. The thirsty King did but cry for water of the Well of *Bethlehem*, and his Champions broke thorow the Host of the Philistines, and fetcht it, *2 Sam.* 23. 15. And will ye not allow the thirsty soul, if not to *break thorow* to fetch it, yet at least to *break out* into an *Oh that one would give me to drink* of the living water, of the fountain of grace, and peace, and love? Will ye allow hunger to break down *stone-walls*? and will ye neither allow the hungry soul to break down these *mud-walls*, nor to wish within it self that they were broken down? In a word then, give me leave earnestly to press
you

you to an earnest pressing after perfect fruition of, and eternal converse with God, and to change the Apostles words, *Heb. 12. 1.* Seeing we are compassed about with so great a divine light, and glory, and brightness, let us be willing and desirous to lay aside this weight of flesh, and this body that so easily resists us with sins and snares, and run with eagerness to the object that is set before us. *Amen, Amen.*

Draw me, we will run after thee.

THE



The Angelical Life.

M A T. 22. 30.

— *Are as the Angels of God in Heaven.*



THE Doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the great things of Christian Religion, as they were accounted a strange thing by all the world, when they were first published and preacht : so indeed by none less entertained, or rather more opposed, than by the wisest of men living in that age, *viz. Scribes, Pharisees, Sadduces* ; who were the disputers, of this world, as the Apostles phrase is, 1 Cor. 1. 20. A thing of wonderful observation,

tion, not only to us, in our day, but even to our blessed Lord himself in the dayes of his flesh, who fetches the cause of it from Heaven, and adores the infinite Wisdom of God in it, *Mat. 11. 25.* Amongst other set Disputations that the Sadduces held with our Saviour, this in this chapter is very famous; where they dispute against the Resurrection of the dead, by an argument fetcht *ab absurdo*, *vers. 25.* grounded upon an instance of a woman that had been married to seven Husbands successively: Now, say they, if there be a Resurrection, whose Wife shall she be then? our Saviour answers by destroying the ground of their argument, and shewing that they disputed upon a false supposition: for, saith he, *In the Resurrection there shall be no marrying*, but men shall be as the Angels of God. In which words this Doctrine is plainly laid down (for I shall not meddle with the Controversie.)

Doct. *That the glorified Saints shall be as the Angels of God in Heaven.* The other Evangelists do lay down the same

same truth, as you may find, *Mark* 12. 25. *Luk.* 20. 36. In the explication of which point, I will shew 1. *Negatively*, wherein the Saints shall not be like the Angels. 2. *Affirmatively*, wherein they shall be like unto them, or as Saint *Luke* hath it, *equal* to them.

1. *Negatively*, *The glorified Saints shall not be like the Angels in essence*: The Angelical essence, and the rational soul are, and shall be different. Souls shall remain souls still, keep their own essence: The essence shall not be changed; souls shall not be changed into Angelical essences.

2. *They shall not be wholly spirits; without bodies*, as the Angels: The spirits of just men now made perfect, are more like to the Angels in this sense, than they shall be after the Resurrection: For now they are spirits without bodies; but the Saints shall have bodies; not such as now (so corruptible, so crazy) not in any thing defective, not needing creature-supplies; But incorruptible, glorious bodies, in some sense spiritual bodies; which are described

described by three characters, 1 *Cor.* 15. 42, 43. *Incorruptible* (somewhat more than immortal) *glorious, powerful*. Neither doth their having bodies any way abate of their perfection or glory; nor render them inferior to the Angels: for even the glorious Redeemer of the world, hath a body, who is yet superior to the Angels; and he shall change the vile bodies of the Saints, and make them like unto his glorious body, *Phil.* 3, *ult.*

3. Neither have we any ground to believe, that the Saints shall be altogether *equal to the Angels in dignity and glory*: But rather, that as man was at first made a little lower than the Angels; so that he shall never come to be exalted altogether so high as they: for it seemeth, that the natural capacity of an Angel, is greater than of a man; and so shall continue; for they are distinct kinds of creatures. As a beast cannot become so wise and intelligent as a man; for then he would cease to be a beast: so neither can a man become so large and capable as an Angel; for then he would cease to be a man.

2. *Affirmatively*, The glorified Saints shall be like the Angels of God in Heaven;

ven; first, In their *qualities*; that is,

1. In being *pure and holy*; whether they shall be equal to them in positive holiness, or no, I know not: whether they shall understand, and know, and love God, in all degrees, as much as the Angels: It seems rather that they shall not; because, as I said before, their capacity shall not be so large. But if in this they be not altogether equal to the Angels, yet it implies no imperfection: for they shall be positively holy as far as their nature is capable; and so shall be perfect in their kind, *Heb. 12. 23. The spirits of just men made perfect*: They shall in this be like unto the Angels, if not equal to them; yea like unto God himself in it; *Be ye holy as I am holy, 1 Per. 1. 15. Mat. 5. ult.* But as to negative holiness, the Saints shall be even equal to the Angels of God in Heaven, *i.e.* they shall have no more sin, no more corruption than they have. They shall be as perfectly freed from all iniquities, imperfections, and infirmities, as the Angels. What can be cleaner than that which hath no uncleanness at all in it? Why, so clean shall all the Saints be, *Rev. 21. 27. No unclean thing shall enter into*

into Heaven. They shall be without all kind of spot or blemish, Ephes. 5. 27. which is a perfect negative holiness: more cannot be said of the Angels in this respect. As branches of this.

2. As the holy Angels do reverence the Divine Majesty, *Isa. 6. 2, 3.* they cover their faces with their wings, crying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Hosts; so shall the glorified Saints. You may see what sweet harmony they make, consenting together to give all the glory of all to God, *Rev. 7. 9, 11, 12.* The Saints stood and cryed, *Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb:* The Angels stood round about saying, *Amen, Amen.*

3. In their readiness to do the will of God, and execute his commands; therefore the Angels are described to have wings, *Isa. 6. 2. with twain they did fly.* How God shall please to employ Angels or Saints in the world to come, is not for us to enquire: But they shall be alike ready to do his will, and serve his pleasure, whatever it shall be. Even whilst the Saints are imperfect on earth, they can cry, *Here am I, send me, Isa. 6. 8.* How much more ready shall they be then,

when all their fetters are knockt off !

4. They shall be as the Angels in their *cheerful* and *unwearied* execution of the will of God : So the Angels are, and so shall the Saints be. The Spirit shall be then *more* willing, and the Flesh shall be *no more* weak, as it is now ; for when it is raised again, it shall be in *power*, 1 Cor. 15. 43. More things of this nature might be added : but I pass lightly over them, because, although they be true, yet they are not principally lookt at in this Text : therefore I come to the second thing wherein the glorified Saints shall be like unto the Angels, and that is ;

2. In their *way of living*. They shall be like the Angels, *i. e.* saith one truly, ἰσαγγέλως βιούντες, living like the Angels : How is that ? our Saviour tells us, Neither marrying, nor being given in marriage : it is added presently in Luk. 20. 36. *For neither can they dye any more* : If there be no dying, there will be no need of propagation ; if no need of propagation, then why should they marry ? The Angels are single, and know no other conjunction, but with God in a spiritual manner : no more shall the Saints. But

what great matter is that to be like the Angels in? what perfection is that? Many Saints, yea and sinners too upon earth, are so like the Angels; nay, and the Devils too. Therefore you must know that our Saviour under this phrase of not marrying, &c. doth comprehend all manner of *creature converse*, all kind of living upon, and delighting in the creature, by a *Synecdoche* of the part, as is ordinary in Scripture; *I have not given upon usury*, saith the Prophet, yet the people curse me, *Jer. 15. 10. i.e.* I have had no dealing in the world, no negotiation: By one kind he understands the whole, *Ezek. 25. 41.* where, by eating their fruits, and drinking their milk, is understood the possessing of all that was theirs: And in many other places, the Spirit of God uses this Tropical way of speaking.

The Angels of God neither marry, nor are given in marriage, *i.e.* they live not upon any created good, delight not in any created comfort; but live entirely upon God, converse with him, are everlastingly beholding his glory, and delighting themselves in him: Thus shall the glorified Saints live for ever.

Their bodies shall not need nor use created supplies, food, physick, rayment, &c. which things in this animal state they stand in need of, *Mat. 6.32.* But that's not all; for their souls shall not any longer desire, nor hanker after any created thing; but (as the Angels) shall be possessors of God, filled with the fulness of God; all the powers and faculties of them perfectly refined and spiritualized, abstracted from all created things, eternally rejoicing and delighting themselves in the contemplation and participation of the supreme and infinite good: For during this earthly and imperfect state, not only the bodies of good men feed upon, and are sustained by the creatures in common with other men, but even their souls do taste too much of worldly contentments, and drink too deep of earthly pleasures, and creature-comforts: Even the most refined souls upon earth, though they do not properly feed upon any thing below God, yet do oft dip the end of their Rod in this hony that lyes upon the earth (with *Jonathan*) do cast an unchaste eye upon their earthly enjoyments, and delight in them in a way too gross and unspiritual,

unspiritual, having abstracted them from God, and loving them with a distinct love. But in the Resurrection it shall not be so : for the holy souls shall be perfectly conformed to the holy God, shall feed upon him singly, live upon him entirely, be wrapt up in him wholly, and be satisfied in him solely and everlastingly : and so shall they be *ἰσάγγελοι*, equal to the Angels. The creature, although it do not fill any truly sanctified soul upon earth, yet it hath some room there ; but then it shall be perfectly cast out, and the soul shall be filled with all the fulness of God : the creature is now much in some godly souls, and something in all of them ; but then it shall be nothing at all to them, or in them ; but God shall be *all in all* ; all things in all of them ; as the way of the Saints living, and their glorified state is described, 1 Cor. 15. 28. *ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς πάντα ἐν πᾶσι*, that God may be all in all. They shall inherit all things : but how is that ? why, see the explication of it in the following words, God will be their God, Rev. 21. 7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God. God shall be unto them

instead of all things. In that state there shall be no need of Sun or Moon, *Rev.* 21. 23. by which excellent and useful creatures, the whole Creation seems to be understood; for they that shall live above the Sun and Moon, shall certainly live above all things that are below these: But how then? why it follows, *The glory of God shall enlighten them, and the Lamb shall be their light: so Rev.* 22. 5. *And there shall be no night there, and they need no Candle, neither light of the Sun; for the Lord giveth them light: All happiness is derived into them from God; and therefore there shall be no night; no want of any creature-comfort to them; neither shall they desire any thing more of the creature, whether small or great, whether Candle or Sun.* For explication of this their blessed life, let me allude to that of our Saviour, *Luk.* 12. 24. *The Fowls of the Heaven neither sow nor reap, yet God seedeth them: so the Saints of Heaven neither want nor desire any created good; for they feed upon God the supreme and infinite good: And again, vers.* 27. *The Lillies neither toil nor spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory*

glory was not arrayed like one of these : These blessed souls have no respect at all to things terrene and created; yet are they so filled and adorned with the glory of the infinite Majesty, that *Solomon* in all his glory was a filthy and ragged thing in comparison of them. In a word, the state of the glorified Saints and Angels is set out by our Saviour in the same manner, by one and the same description, and that is the seeing of God: The life of Angels, is called a continual beholding of the face of God, *Mat. 18. 10.* and the state of the Saints glory and happiness is also a seeing of God, *Mat. 5. 8. Heb. 12. 14. Rev. 22. 4.* *They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.* Now this phrase, the seeing of God, applyed both to the Saints and Angels, doth place their happiness in God alone, excluding the creature; and it doth import the fullness, and clearness, and certainty of that their bliss.

Thus I have shewed you in what *sense* (though I am not able to shew you in what *degree*) the glorified Saints shall be like the Angels of God in Heaven: Their way of living, *v. z.* upon the

blessed God alone, shall be the same with that of the holy Angels.

Application.

From the discovery of the future state of the Saints, I find my self filled with indignation.

1. *Reproof*: Against the *carnal conceits* that many Christians have of Heaven. *Christians* do I call them! Nay, herein they seem rather *Mahumetans*, who place Heaven in the full and lasting enjoyment of all creature-comforts; nay indeed of sinful and abominable pleasures, as one may read in their *Alcoran*. It may be few Christians are altogether so sensual; but, sure I am, the far greater sort of Christians (so called) are very gross and carnal; at least very low in their conceits of the state of future happiness; Heaven is a word as little understood as Holiness; and that, I am sure, is the greatest mystery in the world; it would be tedious to run thorow the particular various apprehensions of men in this matter, and indeed impossible to know them. The common sort of people understand either just nothing by Heaven but a glorious name; or at best, but a free-
ness

ness from bodily torment : As, nothing of Hell affects them, but that dreadful word *fire* ; so nothing of Heaven, but the comfortable word, *Rest* or *safety*. Others, it may be, think there is something positive in Heaven, and they dream of an honourable, easie, pleasant life, free from such kind of toyls, labours, pains, persecutions, reproaches, penuries which men are subject to in this life : This is a true notion, but much below the nature of that happy state ; others are yet more highly affected with the words of *Glory* and *Glorious*, and seem to be much ravished with them ; but are like men in a maze or wonderment, that admire something that they understand not, and are altogether confounded in their own apprehensions of it : As if a man should be mightily taken with such a fine name as *Arabia the happy*, and by a blind fervor of mind should desire to go and visit it. Others rise higher yet in their apprehensions of Heaven, and look upon it as a holy state ; but that holiness is negative, *viz.* a perfect freedom from sin, and all temptations to it : And indeed this is a precious consideration,
and

and that wherein many a weary soul finds much rest. But yet this amounts not to the life of Angels; it is a lower conderation of Heaven, than what our Saviour here presents us with. The state of the glorified Saints, shall not only be a state of freedom from temporal pains, or eternal pains, or a freedom from spiritual pains and imperfections; but a state of perfect *positive holiness, pure light, ardent love, spiritual liberty, holy delights*; when all created good shall perfectly vanish, all created love shall be swallowed up, the soul shall become of a most God-like disposition, shining forth in the glory that he shall put upon it, glorying in nothing but the blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in his divine Image and perfe&ions, and wrapt up entirely into his infinite fulness to all eternity: Which hath made me oft-times to nauseate, and indeed to blame the poor low descriptions of the Kingdom of Heaven which I have found in Books & Sermons, for too dry, yea and gross; which do describe Heaven principally as a place, and give it such circumstances of beauty, firmness, security, light

light and splendor, pleasant society, good neighbourhood, as they think will most commend an earthly habitation. True indeed, the Holy Ghost in Scripture is pleased to condescend so far to our weak capacities, as to describe that glorious state to us by such things as we do best understand, and are apt to be most taken with, and do most gratifie our senses in this world; as a *Kingdom, Paradise, a Glorious City, a Crown, an Inheritance, &c.* But yet it is not the will of God that his enlightened people should rest in such low notions of eternal life: For in other places God speaks of the state of glory, according to the nature and excellency of it, and not according to the weaknels of our understanding; and describes it at another rate, calling it the *Life of Angels*; and here, *the beholding of God* (Mat. 5. 8.) *a coming unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, Ephes. 4. 13. Gods being *All things in us*, 1 Cor. 15. 28. It is called a *Knowing of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ*, Joh. 17. 3. In a word, which is as high as can be spoke, higher indeed than can be perfectly understood, it is called

called a *Being like unto God*, 1 Job. 3.
 21. *We shall be like unto him*. But this
 Use is not so much for *Reproof*, as it is
 for *Information*.

2. Here is matter of *Reproof*, yea and
 of just indignation against the gross,
 low, sensual, earthly life of Professors,
 who yet hope to be the children of the
 Resurrection, and to be as the Angels
 of God in Heaven. What, hope to be
 like them then, and yet altogether un-
 like them now ! I speak not in a passion,
 but out of a just indignation that I have
 conceived against my self, and against
 the generality even of Saints them-
 selves. I am not going to speak of *Co-
 vetousness* commonly so called ; there is
 a sin much like to it, which is not indeed
 a single sin, but an evil and unseemly
 temper, which is *earthly-mindedness*, or
 minding of earthly things ; or if you
 will, because I would not be misunder-
 stood, a living upon the creature, or a
 loving of the creature with a distinct
 love: Oh the insensible secrecy, and
 insuperable power of this creature-
 love ! I cannot sufficiently exclaim
 against it. Why do we spend noble
 affections upon such low and empy
 nothings !

nothings! Are we called with such a *high* Calling, think you, that our conversation should be so low? Is the fulness of the fountain yours, and do ye yet delight to sit down by, and bathe your selves in the shallow streams? Is your *life hid with Christ in God*? Why then do you converse, as if your life were bound up in the creature? Have you laid up your treasure in the blessed God? what do your hearts then so far from it? Is your *happiness* in Heaven? why then is not your *conversation* there too? Do ye count it your bliss to *see* God? what then mean those fond and wanton *glances* that ye cast upon created-comforts, and that unchaste love which you bestow upon things below? I mean, not only the *bleatings of the Sheep, and the lowings of the Oxen*: I speak not of the grosser sort of earthly-mindedness, sensuality, or covetousness; but of that more refined and hidden creature-love; a loving of friends, relations, health, liberty, life, and that not in God, but with a love distinct from that love wherewith we love God. To love all these in God, and for his sake, and as
flowing

flowing from him, and partaking of him, and with the same love wherewith we love God himself, is allowed us: But to love them with a particular love, as things distinct from God, to delight in them meerly as creatures; and to follow them as if some good, or happiness, or pleasure were to be found in them distinct from what is in God; this is a branch of spiritual *Adultery*, I had almost said *Idolatry*. To taste a sweetness in the creature, and to see a beauty and goodness in it is our duty; but then it must be the sweetness of God in it, and the goodness of God which we ought alone to taste and see in it. As we say, *Uxor splendet radiis mariti*, the wife shines with the rayes of her husband: so more truly, every creature shines but by a borrowed light, and commends unto us the goodness, and sweetness, and fulness of the blessed Creator. You have heard that the glorified souls shall live upon God alone entirely, wholly, eternally; and should not the less glorious souls, I mean gracious souls, do so too, in some degree? yea even we who are upon earth, and do yet use creatures, should behold

behold all the scattered beams of goodness, sweetness, perfection that are in these creatures, all united and gathered up in God, and so feed upon them only in God, and upon God in all them. It is the character of wicked and godless men, that they set up, and drive a trade for themselves; live in a way distinct from God, as though they had no dependence upon him, they love the world with a predominant love; they enjoy creature-comforts in a gross, unspiritual manner, they dwell upon the dark side of their mercies, they treasure up riches, not only in their *chests*, but in their *hearts*; they feed upon the creature, not only with their *bodies*, but their very *souls* do feed upon them; and thus, in a word, they *live without God in the world*; All this is no wonder; for that which is of the earth, must needs be earthly, *John 3. 31*. But is it not a monstrous thing, that a heavenly soul should feed upon earthly trash? I speak without any *Hyperbole*; the famous King of *Babylon* forsaking the society of men, and herding himself with the beasts of the earth, and eating grass with the Oxen, was not so absurd

surd a thing, nor half so monstrous or unseemly, as the children of the Most High God, forsaking the true bread of souls, and feeding upon the low fare of carnal men, even created sweetness, worldly goods: Nay, a glorious starr falling from its own sphere, and choaking it self, in the dust, would not be such an eminent piece of baseness: For what is said of the true God in one sense, *John 3. 3* I. is true of the truly godly in this sense; *He that cometh from Heaven is above all, i. e. above all things that are below God himself.*

3. Shall this life of Angels be also the life of Saints? *This may then serve as a powerful consideration, to mortifie in us the love of this animal life, to make us weary of this low kind of living, and quicken us to long after so blessed a change.* Well might the Apostle say indeed, that to dye was gain, *Phil. 1. 21.* For, is not this gain, to exchange an animal life, for an *Angelical* life; a life which is in some sense common to the very beasts with us, for that which in some sense may be called the life of God? For as the blessed and holy God lives upon his own infinite and self-sufficient

sufficient fulness, without being beholden to any thing without himself; so shall the Saints live upon him, and upon the self-same infinite fulness, and shall not need any creature-contributions. The Apostle indeed saith, That *the last enemy to be destroyed is death*, (I Cor. 15. 26.) which is true of enemies without us; and it is true with respect to Christ, who shall make a general Resurrection from the dead; for that is the proper meaning of it: But it is true also, that the last enemy to be overcome within us, is the love of life: Therefore it is said, That a man will part with any thing to keep his life, *Job 2. 4.* And we do generally excuse the matter, and cry, Oh! life is sweet, life is precious. It must be confessed, and it may be granted; I believe that there is an inclination of the soul to the body (arising from that dear and unconceivable union that God himself hath made of them) which is purely natural (some say altogether necessary for the maintaining of man in this complex state) and not in it self sinful: Possibly there may not be found a man upon earth so holy and mortified, in whom

whom this is not found; certainly it is the last hinderance to be removed out of the way of our perfect happiness. This, although in it self natural, yea necessary, and without blame, yet in the inordinateness of it, ordinarily, if not constantly, becomes sinful. I count him the most perfect man in the world, who loves not his own life with an inordinate, sinful love: who loves it only in God, and not with a creature-love distinct from God. There are two wayes whereby this natural and lawful love of life becomes sinful, *viz. immoderateness*, and *inordinateness*: *Immoderateness* is when men love their lives at that rate, that they are filled with unreasonable and distracting fears, cares, and thoughts about them, when the whole *business* of life is almost nothing else but a studiouness to preserve the *Being* of life. *Inordinateness* is when men, though they do not love their lives at that excessive rate, yet do love life as a creature-good, not in God, nor in order to him, but love it for it self, as something out of God: Every carnal man in the world is guilty of the latter; and I doubt but few Saints altogether

gether free from the guilt of it. Now that this immoderate love of life ought to be subdued in Christians, all men almost will grant: If any will not grant it, we can easily prove it from the command of God, *Mat. 6. 25. Take no thought for your life*, I *Joh. 2. 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.* Both which words, in the favourablest interpretation that can be given of them, do in the judgement of all, forbid immoderation: Nay, a meer Philosopher would enforce this from meer moral considerations, which I cannot now stand upon. But this inordinate love of life, as it is a more secret, sticking evil, a more refined corruption, is harder to be discovered, and men are loath to be convinced of the evil of it. Now this particular distinct loving of life, not as in God, but in it self, as a creature-good, is clearly condemned in that first and great Commandment, *Mat. 22. vers. 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, &c.* God the Supreme, Infinite, Perfect, Original, Essential, Self-sufficient Good, is to be loved in the highest,

highest, and purest, and strongest manner, that the heart of men is capable to love; and all other things only in him, and under him, and as being of him, and for his sake. Let it be allowed that life is good; yet it must be added, that it is but a created good: let it be allowed that life is comfortable; yet it must be acknowledged, that mans chiefest comfort and happiness doth not stand in this animal life. So then, life it self is to be loved in God, who is the fountain and spring of life, it is to be loved in the quality of a created good, and no otherwise: Now created goods are to be loved only in the Creator, as coming from him, as partaking of him, as leading to him. Argue the case a little, thus: The soul of man is allowed to love its body with which the great God hath matcht it; and to love union with this body, which union we call life: But this body being a creature, and a creature much inferior to it self, and much more ignoble than it self, cannot in reason be judged to be the fit and adequate object of its strongest and best affections: That must needs be something more excellent than

than it self, and that cannot be any thing in this world (for this world hath nothing so noble, so excellent in it as the soul of man) it must indeed be the Creator himself. Well, seeing God is the supreme, self-sufficient, perfect Good, he is to be loved with all the strength and powers of the soul, singly and entirely: And the will of God, being God himself, is not only to be submitted to, or rested in, but to be chosen and loved above all created things; yea even above life it self, the best of creatures. So then, if it be the will of God to call for our lives, we ought readily to give them up; because we ought to love the will of God much more than our lives. I pray you drink in that notion, *viz.* that the will of God being pure, holy, perfect, should not only be submitted to, or rested in, but even loved and chosen above all creatures: Now the will of God is not that only whereby he teacheth men, and prescribes Laws to them, but that whereby he rules, and governs the world, and disposes of men in any condition of life, or takes away their lives from them. The eternal fountain
of

of goodness can send forth nothing but what is perfectly good : and that which is perfectly good, ought to be loved with an universal, pure, and (as far as possible) perfect love. This you will say, perhaps, is a high and a hard saying : But, let it not seem impossible, for a man to love his own life only in God, and in subordination to him ; for this God requires (and he requires not things impossible) *Luk. 14. 26. If any man come after me, and hate not his own life, he cannot be my Disciple, i. e. not simply hate it, but in comparison of me and my will : It is not then impossible ; nay, you see it is a necessary duty, without which we cannot be Christs Disciples. The Saints of old found it possible. Holy Paul gives this answer readily, *Act. 21. 13. I am ready to dye at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus ; and Act. 20. 24. I count not my life dear unto me, so that I might finish my course with joy : It is witnessed of the whole Army of the Saints, in Rev. 12. 11. That they loved not their lives unto the death, i. e. they did not value them in respect of God and his truth. Neither let any one flatter himself, and say,*
Yea,*

Yea, if I were called to dye for God, I would rather do it than deny him: For the will of God is as much to be eyed in his sending for us by a natural death, as by martyrdom, and a not giving up our lives to him at any time, is as truly to deny him and his will, as not to give them up at the stake, when we are called to it. Besides, how shall we imagine that he that is unwilling to dye in his bed, should be willing to dye at a stake? Now this duty of being mortified to the love of this animal life, being so difficult, yet so necessary, and so noble; how doth it become every Saint to study to attain to this perfection! which, that we may, let us press upon our selves this Consideration, this Doctrine, That the glorified Saints shall live as the Angels of God in Heaven. We know that if this body were broken down, this low life cut off, we should live like Angels, not being beholden any more to poor creatures for help or comfort, but should be filled with the fulness of God, filled with his Image and Glory, and live upon him entirely for evermore. Yea I may add, that this very living above our own lives, meerly

at the will of God, is a participation of the Angelical Life even in this world : Therefore labour to be mortified to that love of this life which is here upon earth ; yea be weary of it, yea almost ashamed of it.

4. Shall we thus live the lives of the Angels, subsisting in God, feasting upon him, filled with him to all eternity ? *This may moderate our sorrow which we conceive for the loss of any created good, houses, lands, husband, wife, children, &c.* yet a little while, and we shall not miss them, shall not need them, shall not desire them any more : The blessed Angels live a glorious life, and they have none of these ; but are perfectly satisfied in the enjoyment of God alone : They have no wives nor children, yet they want none : And yet a little while, and we shall have none neither, neither shall we want them, having all things in the God of all things : They neither marry, nor are given in marriage ; but are in conjunction with the Father, with love, and goodness, and truth it self ; and so they have no want of any thing. If you have no Candles left in the house, yet it is towards day-break, and

and the Sun will rise upon you, and you shall need none, and yet have light enough too. In a word, learn to live beside them whilst you have them, and you will be the better able to live without them, when they are removed.

5. I come now to the fifth and last Use that I shall make of this Doctrine; and oh that you and I may make this happy use of it! Shall the Saints be as the Angels of God in their way of living, in living upon God, and enjoying all happiness in him alone for ever? Shall this certainly be our life in Heaven? oh then *labour to begin this life upon earth!* If you cannot perfectly transcribe, yet, at least, imitate that Angelical kind of life. Though you are here imprisoned in a body of earth, and oft cumbered and clogg'd with bodily infirmities, and called to attend upon bodily necessities; yet, as far as this animal state will permit, live upon God. Do not excuse nor vindicate that slow kind of earthly life; do not justify your living below and besides God; but stir up your selves to behold where your happiness lies, and live not willingly below it. Certainly a godly soul

hath more than bare hope in this world: God the blessed, infinite and communicative good, hath not lockt up himself so far out of sight, but that he gives his people a comfortable beholding of him even whilst they are in their Pilgrimage: and what *Solomon* saith of the life of the godly, he means it of their present life, *Prov. 15. 24. The way of life is above, to the wise:* Their living not only shall be, but is now above; it is a high way of living: They are certainly a puny sort of Mechanical Christians, that think and talk only of a Heaven to come, and dream of an happiness without them, and distinct from them: The truly godly and God-like soul cannot so content himself, but being spirited and principled from above, is carryed out after the Infinite and Almighty Good, as a thing is carryed towards its centre; and hastens into his embraces, as the Iron hastens to the Load-stone, and longs to be in conjunction with it. If therefore ye be from Heaven, live above all, above all earthly things: *If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, Col. 3. 1. If ye be born of God, live upon God,*

God, and *suck not the breasts* of a stranger. Deny self, live besides self, *i. e.* live not to your lusts, live not to the service of your senses, to the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eye, to the pride of life; let not your souls be servants to your sins, no nor to your senses; that were for servants to ride on horse-back, and Princes to walk on foot, *Eccles. 10. 7.* Live above self, *i. e.* let your souls quit all their own interest in themselves, and entirely resign themselves to God as to all points of duty and service. But that's not all; neither is that it which I press you to from these words; but live above the creature, and whatsoever is in it, *viz.* delighting in God, conversing and communing with him alone, as the chiefest Good: Desire not any creature any further, than as it may help you forward to the Creator; neither delight in it any further, than as it either represents some of the divine perfections, witnesseth something of divine love, or leadeth to some divine participation or communion: Seeing we shall come to live upon God, and delight in God alone without any creature; let us now live upon,

feed upon, love God alone in every creature: Now to give you a more distinct knowledge of this high and noble life, I will explain it in some particulars, negatively and affirmatively. First, *Negatively*.

1. *Live not upon Self*; I speak not of living unto Self, but live not upon Self, Self-excellencies, Self-sufficiencies, any created accomplishments; which was the life of the *Stoicks*, those great Philosophers, who placed happiness in the enjoyment of themselves, which they called *ἀταραξία*. To enjoy ones self indeed is a high duty, a noble priviledge, a duty of the Gospel, *Luk. 21. 19. Possess ye your souls*: But how must we enjoy our selves? why only in God. He enjoys himself,

1. Not who in a sullen melancholy, retires to a solitary and monastical life, as many of the sower sort of Papists do.

2. Nor he that in a proud mood disdains the perfections of God shining forth in other men; and hiding himself from them through envy, contents himself to sit and admire his own personal accomplishments, as many humorists do.

3. Not

3. Nor he who finding nothing without him, nor knowing nothing above him to give his soul her full rest, settles upon a foundation of his own, and admires a self-sufficiency in the temper of his own spirit a little subdued by Philosophical precepts, as the *Stoicks* did, and our *Quakers* do: But he who enjoys himself in God, *i. e.* who doth not view himself in the narrow point of his own Being, but taking a view of himself in the unbounded essence of God, loves, and enjoys, and values himself, and all his personal excellencies as he is in God, and partakes of his perfections. To live in a way of self-converse, is below the end of mans creation, who was made for a higher good: And hereby a man shall never obtain true happiness; for it is peculiar to God alone to be happy in himself.

“ In a word, a soul that confines it self
“ to its self, and lives, and moves, and
“ rejoyces only within the narrow cell
“ of its own particular Being, deprives
“ it self of that Almighty and Original
“ Goodness and Glory that fills the
“ world, and shines thorow the whole
“ Creation.

2. *Live not upon any creature without your selves.* Self indeed is a creature; but yet for clearness in proceeding, we shall distinguish them. Now this is the life of the greatest sort of men, they live beside God, and move only within the sphere of the creature: you will easily understand that I speak not of the bodies living upon the creature; for so God hath appointed that it shall live: and yet as to this too, I say with our Saviour, *Man liveth not by bread alone, &c.* But I speak of the soul of man living upon the creature as its highest good, and feeding upon it as its best fare: They rise up early, and sit up late, and God is not in all their thoughts: They are filled with domestick and forrein comforts, but behold not the Father of Lights from whom all these descend: They live upon the good things of the world, yet live without God in the world. Now by these men,

1. I do not mean those Heathens that in the most Idolatrous manner, do in the literal sense, set up the creatures for Gods.

2. Nor those Christians that in a most gross

gross manner do make Idols of the creatures, and place their happiness in them.

3. No nor only those earthly Professors, who follow the world too eagerly, and have such a deep and rooted respect for it, that they can be ordinarily content to suffer creature-employments to juggle God and duties out of their hearts and houses, whose worldliness is apparently too hard for their Religion. Who then? Shall we come any nearer! yes;

4. Those are guilty of creature-converse, who do not enjoy all creatures in God; who love any thing in any creature with a distinct love, that do not love it only in God; who love silver, gold, houses, lands, trading, friends, with a particular pinching love. Oh take heed of this creature-love; of valuing any created thing any otherwise than in God, any otherwise than as being from God, partaking of him, and leading to him.

3. *Live not upon Ordinances*: These are Gods institut^{ions}; love them, cleave to them, attend upon them, let no temptation cause you to leave them;

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but

but live not upon them, place not your Religion, place not your hope, your happiness in them, but love them only in God; attend upon them, yet not so much upon them, as upon God in them; lie by the Pool, but wait for the Angel: love not, no not a divine ordinance for its own sake: Why, who doth so? Alas, who almost doth not?

1. Thus did they in *Ezek.* 33. 32. who delighted in the Prophets eloquence, and in the Rhetorick of his Sermons as much as in a well tuned voice, and harmonious musick: and so do thousands in *England*, who read the Bible for the style or the stories sake, and love to sit under learned and elegant discourses, more for *accomplishment*, than for *conversion*: And swarms of Priests who preach themselves, more than Christ Jesus even in his own ordinances; as a proud Boy rides a horse into the Market, to set forth himself more than his Masters goods.

2. But there are many not so gross as these, who do yet use ordinances in a way very gross and unspiritual, placing their devotion in them, and sinking their Religion into a settled course of
hearing

hearing or praying; who will wait upon God (as they call it) at some set and solemn times, *New Moons* and *Sabbaths*, it may be evening and morning; but Religion must not be too busie with them, nor intermeddle in their ordinary affairs, or worldly employments; it hath no place there; they do not count it a garment for every dayes wear.

3. And not only these, but even almost all men are too apt to seek rest in duties and ordinances; or, at least, to be pretty well satisfied with the work done, whether they have conversed with God there or no: Oh if you love your souls, seek your happiness higher! conversing with divine ordinances, I confess, is honourable and amiable, but it is too low a life for an immortal soul.

Affirmatively,

Let nothing satisfy you but God himself; take up with no pleasure, no treasure, no portion, no paradise; nay, no Heaven, no happiness, below the infinite, supreme, and self-sufficient good. Let your eye be upon him, and his all-filling fulness; let your desire be unto him, and to the remembrance of his
name

name; follow hard after to know the Lord, and to enjoy the Father through his Son Jesus Christ; let your fellowship be with the Father, and with the Son by the Spirit, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. O love the Lord all ye his Saints, *Psal.* 31. 23. yea love him with all your soul, and all your strength, *Mat.* 22. 37. yea and keep your selves alwaies in the love of God, *Jude* 21. persevere and increase in the love of God; *Keep your selves in the love of God.* Oh sweet duty! Oh amiable pleasant task! Oh sweet and grateful command! Away ye crowd of creatures, I must keep my heart for my God: Away ye gawdy tutors, away ye glittering toyes, there is no room for you: My whole soul, if its capacity were ten thousand times larger than it is, were too scant to entertain the supreme good, to let in infinite goodness and fulness. Oh charge it upon your selves with the greatest vehemence! love the Lord, O my soul, keep thy self in the love of God; let the love of God constrain you, and keep your selves under the most powerful constraints of it. In a word, live upon God as upon uncreated life it self; drink at the fountain,

tain, feed upon infinite fulness; depend upon Almighty Power, refer yourselves to unsearchable wisdom, and unbounded love; see nothing but God in the creature, taste nothing but God in the world, delight your selves in him; long for communion with him, and communications from him, to receive of his fulness grace for grace. Then do we live most like Angels, when we live most purely in God, and find all the powers of our souls spending themselves upon him, and our selves, our life, and all the comforts of it flowing from him, and again swallowed up in him. But because we are yet in the body, I shall explain it in these following particulars.

I. *Converse with God in all your Self-excellencies.* I bade you before not converse with these; now, I say, converse with God in these. Thus do the Angels, they know nothing that they have of their own, they enjoy nothing distinct from God: They are excellent creatures, excellent in knowledge, power, holiness, &c. yet they enjoy all their excellencies in God, and ascribe them all to him, *Rev. 7. 12.* And so let us labour to do.

I. View

1. View your selves, not in your own particular Beings, but in the Essence of God; look upon your selves as being and subsisting in the midst of an Infinite Essence, in which the whole Creation is, as it were, wrapt up, and doth subsist.

2. And what ever excellency you find in your souls or bodies, look not upon it as your own; maintain not a *Meum* and *Tuum*, a distinction of interests between God and your selves; but look upon all as Gods, and enjoy it in him.

3. When you find your selves tempted to cast a fond and unchaste look upon the beauty, strength, activity, or temper of your own bodies, upon the ingenuity, wisdom, constancy, courage, composedness of your own souls; take heed of settling into a selfish admiration of any of them, but enjoy them in God, and say, This, O my body, this, O my soul, is no other than the portraiture of the Blessed God; these created excellencies are broken beams of the infinite, unspotted, uncreated perfections! *Jer.* 9. 23, 24. Having once attained to this, we shall no longer covet to be admired,

mired, desire to be commended, fret at being undervalued; I mean not in a selfish manner, but rather break out in a spiritual passion with the Psalmist, *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works in the children of men !* Psal. 107. 8.

3. Nay, let me add, when you find your selves ready to put your own stamp upon Gods best coin; to look upon supernatural gifts and graces with a sinful selfish admiration, remember that you have them only in Christ Jesus, and enjoy them in your head; labour to enjoy grace it self only in Christ; as the Apostle, *Gal. 2. 20. I, yet not I, but Christ in me: I laboured, yet not I, but the grace of God,* 1 Cor. 15. 10. So ought we to glory; I believe, I love, I am patient, penitent, humble; yet not I, but the grace of God that is with me, Christ Jesus that dwelleth in me. And indeed a godly man who thus lives at the very height of his own Being, yea and above it too, knows best how to reverence himself, yea and to love himself too, and yet without any self-love: For he loves himself in God, and his own endowments as divine ornaments.

2. *Converse*

2. **Converse with God, and live upon him in the excellencies of all other creatures, and in all your creature-enjoyments. We cannot live without creatures, as the Angels do indeed; but let us come as near them as we can, which is by living above creatures: place your happiness in God, and your hearts upon him; labour to find God all things to you, and in you, and to be filled with his fulness; labour to get your understandings filled with the knowledge of God, your wills filled with his divine will, your hearts filled with his infinite goodness and sweetness, your memories filled with the remembrance of his name, your whole souls filled with his holy and pure Image, filled with the fruits of his holy Spirit: Nay, let these very bodies be filled not only with his good creatures; but more especially with his good will in the creatures. - It is said indeed of the sensual Epicures of the world, that their bellies are filled with Gods *hid treasure*, i. e. with rare and precious delicacies: But how much better doth God fill the bellies of his Saints with his *hid treasures*, when he feedeth them with his**

divine

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divine favour, and *dippeth his hand* with them *in the dish*? This is meat within meat, which the Saints eat of, which other men, though they feed at the same Table, know not of. The glorified Saints shall be satisfied wholly and perfectly with the Divine Image, shining gloriously on them, and in them; to which purpose that of the Psalmist may be accommodated, *Psal. 17. ult. When I awake, &c.* Well, we cannot be so satisfied in this life, it seems; however, though we cannot be so satisfied with it; yet let us not be satisfied without it, nor satisfied with any thing besides it: Resolve, holy soul, well, if I must not be fully satisfied with the Image of my heavenly Father till I awake, I will lie down and fall asleep hungry as I am then; for I will not fill my mouth with chaff, nor my soul with *the husks that the Swine do eat*. But, in the mean time, get what you can of God out of creature-enjoyments.

I. *Enjoy all things for God*: And *use* these two wayes.

1. *Use all for him*: Those riches, honours, interests, friends, which are *clogs upon the heels* of others, let them be

be as *heels* to you to carry you Heavenward; let your souls be *winged* with those very enjoyments, wherewith the *wings* of others are *pinioned*; and that which is *sewel* to their worldly lusts, let it be as *sewel* to feed and nourish your spiritual love. To use what we have for God, is the only way of not abusing it: This is one way of enjoying all for God, to use all for him; and yet there is something higher in that phrase of enjoying all for God, than this *viz.*

2. *Value no creature-comfort any further than as it leads to God:* And this is a double sense too. *First*, Value things to be good only by this, by their leading you unto God. *Perfectum in suo genere est mensura reliquorum*: Now God being the Supreme and Infinite Good, any thing is so far good, as it leads to the enjoyment of him: Now the enjoyment of God is only in being like to him; Holiness is his Image: So then every thing is good that tends to sanctification, and to make men partakers of a Divine Nature. We are usually mistaken in the true notion of good and evil, of mercies and judgements judging

judging according to the taste, as foolish Patients do; but Gods thoughts are not as our thoughts. Measure all things by the proportion they bear, and the tendency they have to the Supreme Good; and call not any thing evil that brings nearer to him, nor any thing good that draws off from him. *Secondly*, When you have found a thing that is really good, tending and leading to the chief good, and to the possession of him; labour to enjoy it, and rejoyce in it only under this notion, as such; when you love it, let it be with a pure spiritual love; and so order your delight in it, that it may be said, you do rather rejoyce in the end of it, than in the enjoyment of it.

2. Another way of living upon God in the creature, is, *To enjoy all things as partaking of him. Every good and perfect gift is from above.* Every beam of created light floweth out of the *Father of light*, James 1. 17. When the blessed and glorious God framed this stately fabrick of the visible world, because there was nothing better in the world than himself, he was pleased to copy out himself in it, and to spread his own
infinite

infinite perfections over it, and thorow it, *Rom. I. 20.* so that every particular good is a blossom of the first goodness; every created excellency is a dark draught of God, & a broken beam of this infinite Sun of Righteousness. Created life, beauty, wisdom, goodness, sweetness, are nothing else but effluxes, or rather ebullitions out of the self-sufficient fountain, scant communications made of himself, from uncreated life, essential wisdom, universal goodness: And under this notion we ought only to enjoy them, and delight in them: And if we do so, we do not so much enjoy them, as God in them. Oh labour to do so! look upon the perfections which you find here below, not so much as the perfections of this or that particular Being, but as they are so many drops risen out of the fountain of all perfections, in whom they all meet, and are centred. It is well exprest by one, *In a particular Being, love the universal goodness*; let the whole world be as the Garden of God to you, where every creature is a flower, from which you may suck something of the divine sweetness. Alas, at what a low

low and sensual rate do we live, when we rejoyce in creatures, either as they are *excellent*, or as they are *ours*; where-as indeed neither of these is true: For they are not excellent, but God is excellent in them: And how can we call any thing our own, when God made both us and all things for himself? Oh how injurious is it to the blessed God, when we rob him of his own perfections that he hath imprinted upon the creature, by loving it, and delighting in it not as in him, but as something distinct from him! Nay, we are then injurious to our selves, as we shall see by and by. Labour to enjoy, and to converse with God in the creatures. *O how precious are the thoughts of thee unto me.* O God! cryed *David*, when he had been meditating of the creatures excellencies, *Psal. 139. 17.* Labour to abstract your minds from terrene things even in the enjoyment of them, and call upon your selves to love, and live, and feed upon God in them; live not upon the dark side of your mercies, but upon the representations of God in them. Is there any thing good? Oh this is a taste of infinite Goodness! Is there any thing sweet?

sweet ? Oh how sweet is the God that made it so ! Is there any thing lovely ? it is a picture of him whose name is *Love*. Is any thing firm, stable, lasting ? it is a shadow of that glorious essence, with whom there is no shadow of change. Have you any thing strong ? it arises out of that God with whom is *everlasting strength*. Doth any creature give rest, ease, refreshment ? it springs out of the All-satisfying fulness of God. In a word, labour to climb up by every created excellency, as by so many beams to the Father of lights : let all the world be to you as Gods Temple, and be ready to say of every place, as *Jacob*, *How dreadful is this place ; surely this is no other than the house of God !* that God who runs thorow all created Beings, and from himself derives several prints of beauty and excellency all the world over : But especially take heed of your own created-comforts, that they do not insensibly lead away your hearts, and ensnare you into a sinful, particular, distinct love of them ; which is a sin soon committed, hardly discerned, and most hardly reformed. If any
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be freed from these inordinate affections, sure they are but few, and whole few have come dearly by it; as he said in another case; *with a great sum* they have obtained this freedom; they have payed for it, not with the foreskins of the Philistines, but with the lives of what they so loved, there being no way to cure this evil distemper, but cutting off the member infected with it, the part that it fed upon. As a branch of this head, let me add, labour to *live upon God in the excellencies of other men*: value them and all their accomplishments only in God, as he that did *diligere Deum habitantem in Augustino*: Admire God, and enjoy God in them: Where ever you see wisdom, goodness, ingenuity, holiness, justice, or any other accomplishment: say, Here and there is God. And this is the honest way of making our selves Masters of whatever is another mans, and enjoying it, as truly as he himself doth; yea as truly as if it were our own: when we behold all these beams, as coming from the same fountain of lights, and do love them all in him with an universal love.

This

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This is the rare Art of having nothing, yet possessing all things, of being rich, though one have nothing : and of being wise, though one know nothing.

3. The last way of living upon God in the creature, is, *To taste and feed upon the love of God in them* ; not only his common bounty, but his special love in Christ. The good will of God gives a sweet relish to every morsel, as I hinted before. Even in the midst of all your delightful, pleasant, sweet enjoyments, let your souls be more affected with this, than with them ; let this be as the *Manna* lying upon the top of all your outward comforts, which your spirits may gather up, and feed upon. But this I toucht upon before ; therefore I shall add no more concerning it. Thus I have shewed you how you may imitate the life of Angels in living upon God, even whilst you live in the body. To this I may add another particular or two.

3. *Converse with God, and live upon him in all his Ordinances* : Let communion with God be your drift in every duty, and the very life and soul, and sweetness of every ordinance. You

never

never read of a soul more thirsty after Ordinances, than *David*, as might appear abundantly : yet if you look well into the expressions, you will find that it was no so much after them, as after God in them ; not after the dead letter, but after the living God, *Psa. 42. 2. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God ;* and *Psal. 84. 2. My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God.* Let the Word preachd or read be as a voice from Heaven talking with you ; let your conference be a comment upon that Word ; let meditation be as a kind of bringing down God into your souls ; and prayer as a raising up of your souls into God ; nothing but faith and love put into phrases. And so of all the rest.

4. *Converse with God in all his Providences ;* prosperity, adversity, plenty, penury, health, sickness, peace and perplexity. This is a large Theme : But as to prosperity, I have spoken something already, under that head of conversing with God in creature-enjoyments : As for adversity, I have said much more in a large discourse, to describe and commend the Art of con-

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versing

versing with God in afflictions : Briefly at this time, converse not with losses, wants, afflictions, but with God in them; and that not only with the justice, righteousness, severity and sovereignty of God in them : but with the goodness & mercy of God in them : They are dark Providences, we had not need to dwell all together on the dark side of them. If all the waies of the Lord towards his people be *mercy and truth*, *Psal. 25, 10.* then his roughest and most uncouth waies are so too : If God be wholly love, *1 Joh. 4. 8.* then his very corrections proceed not from hatred : If it be his name to be good, and to do good, *Psal. 119. 68.* where have we learnt then to call his afflicting Providences Evils, and to divide evil, which is but one, even as God is one, into *culpa* and *pæna*, sin and affliction ? surely we speak as men : And if God call them so, he speaks after the manner of men, as he often doth. If the governing will of God be pure, perfect, and infinitely good and righteous, ought we not to converse with it in a free and chearful manner ; yea, and to love it too ? In a word, pore not upon creature-changes,

nor

nor the uncertain wheels of motion that are turning up and down, we know not how, nor how oft; but fix your selves upon that All-seeing eye, that unbounded understanding, that unsearchable and infinite goodness that derives it self thorow the whole universe, and sits in all the wheels of motion, governing all the strange motions of the creatures in a wonderful and powerful manner, and carrying them all in their several Orbs to one last and blessed end.

Thus imitate the Angelical life, even whilst you are in the body; converse with God in self-excellencies, in creature-excellencies, Ordinances, Providences: And yet labour to be more like him still, to abstract your mind from all these, and all material and sensible things, and to converse with God without the help of any creature, I mean in the spirit, and by a secret feeling of his Almighty Goodness, and the energy of grace, and the communications of a divine life, in your souls. In a word, if you would taste of Heaven whilst you are upon Earth, labour

above all things for a true conjunction of your hearts with God, in a secret feeling of his goodness, and a reciprocation of love to him; and to find the holy and blessed God exercising his grace and power upon all the faculties of your souls, and rendering them like unto himself; and all these powers of the soul mutually spending themselves upon him freely and entirely, as upon the chiefest good, which is their proper and full object. Seeing the Saints in glory shall be like unto the Angels of God in their way of living in and upon God alone, receive, I pray, this Exhortation, which I have so largely prosecuted, and labour to begin that life as far as you can, upon Earth. Is there not reason for such an Inference? Doth it not now flow naturally from the Doctrine? If you think it do not, I will add two or three particulars to strengthen this Inference; or at least to clear it.

1. It is highly reasonable that we begin to be that which we expect to be for ever, to learn that way of living in which we hope to live to all eternity: So that I infer upon as strong ground as
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the Apostle, 1 *Joh. 3. 3. He that hath this hope purifieth himself, &c.*

2. If this be the life of Angels, then it is the highest and noblest life that any created Being is capable of. As by the bread of Angels, and the tongue of Angels, the most excellent food, and the most excellent language, is understood in Scripture; so must we understand this life of Angels: Now it is very suitable to the reasonable soul, that immortal, noble Being, to aim at the highest and noblest life: See *Mat. 16. 26. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

3. This shall not only be our life in Heaven, but it self is something of Heaven, a beginning of Heaven. This life is not a thing really distinct from life eternal, *Joh. 17. 3. this is life eternal, &c. 1 Joh. 5. 13. Ye have eternal life.* Therefore we read of eternal life abiding in men, and not abiding in them, 1 *Joh 3. 15.* So also, *Joh. 6. 54. Whoso eateth my flesh hath eternal life.* A holy soul thus deified, thus living in and upon God, is as truly glorified upon Earth in some degree, as the world is enlightened by the morning Sun; which is as

truly, though not so gloriously, as by thy Sun in its greatest height. Oh low and ignoble spirits, that can be satisfied with a happiness which shall only be in the world to come! Certainly it is true and proper speech to say, that a *Participation* of God is an *Anticipation* of Heaven; and to be like unto him, is to be with him. You see what reason I have to make such an Inference, and to form it into such an earnest Exhortation: Oh therefore I beseech you before God and his holy Angels, to endeavour to *be* like him, and *live* like them! *Object.* Say not, How can men on Earth live like Angels! *Answer.* 1. But fall on and imitate them, though it be——*hanc passibus equis*: labour to be *ὡς ἄγγελοι*, if you cannot be altogether, *ἰσάγγελοι*. 2. We are bidden to live the life of God, *Mat. 5. ult. Be perfect, &c.* So *1 Pet. 1. 15. Be ye holy, &c.* If I speak high, how high speak these Texts? *Obj.* Say not, But how can this animal life permit this! *Answer.* 1. For 1. Thus men have lived in the body. Thus lived *Enoch*, *Gen. 5. 22.* Thus lived *Paul*, *Phil. 1. 21.* Thus lived *David*

David that man after Gods own heart (the greatest and most divine character that can be given of a mortal man) *Psal.* 73. 25. there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. 2. Cannot we live in the body, except we live to the body? You see Saints upon Earth live above other men upon Earth, and yet a little more pains, take the other flight, and you may live above your selves too, higher than you do: I will only add a Motive or two to this duty of living upon God.

1. *The last enemy to be overcome, is creature-love:* This is the last enemy that keeps the field, by which alone the greatest sort of men do perish everlastingly; beat down this, and you win the day, and shall wear the Crown: nay the very conquest of it is a Crown, as I said before.

2. *To live upon God in the creature, is to enjoy the creature in the best sense.* You will lose nothing of the creature by this means, but shall enjoy it more fully than ever you did. For the creature is ten thousand times sweeter in God, than it is in it self. Yea in a word, this is the

way to enjoy all the world, and to enjoy the accomplishments of all men, and all things as much as if they were your own.

3. *It is the way never to lose any thing.* He that lives upon God, spends upon a stock that cannot be wasted, drinks at a fountain that cannot be exhausted. So much as we enjoy of God in the creature, we do not lose with it: and that which we do not so enjoy, we deserve to lose. This then is the secure and honourable life; in comparison of which the life of a Prince is but a wallowing in the mire, *Lord give us ever more this bread, and hearts to feed upon it. Amen.*

E I N I S.



Dei & Animæ Consortium :

SIVE

Periphrasis in posterius, ἡμισυχίων

I JOH. 4. 16.

— ἐν τῷ θεῷ μένει, καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

(*meus omnis :*

O *Mnia mē Deus est ; idem Deus est
Ipse Deo totus ; totus est ipse Dei.*

Omnia mihi Deus est.

In Deo cuiusque boni creati

Singula vires penitissimè insunt

In Deo solaminā que implicantur

Omnia vite.

Omnis Deus est meus.

Omne quod fecit mihi dat benignus ;

Omne quod præ se quia nil pependi,

Insuper menti dedit appetenti

Omne quod ipse est.

Ipse

*Ipse in Deo totus.
In Deo verfor medio, que spiro,
In Deo grandescere concupisco,
Luceo totus radiis paternâ
Luce recepris.*

*Ipse totus Dei.
Non mei, non alterius creati
Sum, (Deus) sed quantus ego, tuus sum?
Vita quos à te radios recepi,
Oro, reflectat!*

*Cuncta te subter (Deus alme) quæ sunt,
Judico mente inferiora nostrâ:
Absit ut rebus studeat caducis
Mens generosa!*

*Fac te ipsum, mi Deus, ipsiorem
Huic mea menti penitus seipsâ,
Fac me ipsum, mi Deus, uniorem,
Quàm mihi tecum!*

GOD



G O D and the S O U L :

O R ,

A Periphrase upon

I JOH. 4. 16.

—dwelleth in God, and God in him.

MY God is All things unto me ;
All God is also mine :

I am, O Lord, wholly in thee ;
And also wholly thine.

God is All things unto me.
The powers of each created good
In God are all contain'd ;
In him my Comforts all do bud,
Flourish, and are maintain'd.

All God is mine :
He gave me all that he had made,
All which did not suffice
My larger Soul ; therefore I pray'd,
He gave himself likewise.

I am.

I am wholly in God.
I'th' midst of God I live and breath,
In him I'm only bright,
The rayes with which I shine beneath
Are borrow'd from his light.

I am wholly God's.
O Lord I'm not at all mine own,
Nor for another free :
Let life be a reflection
Of beams receiv'd from thee !

All things below thee (Lord) I judge
To be below my Soul;
Oh let my nobler mind even grudge
It self in dust to rowl !

Be more my self, O God; to me
Than I my self have been ;
Make me, O God, more one with thee,
Than with my self ! *Amen.*

F I N I S.

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c,